

The Gospel According to ST. JOHN

INTRODUCTION

1. Title. Almost without exception the Fourth Gospel has, since the earliest Christian centuries, been known as the Gospel According to John. The name John means, “The Lord is gracious.” For the derivation of the name see on Luke 1:13. For the meaning of the word translated “gospel” see on Mark 1:1.

2. Authorship. This Gospel is anonymous to the extent that, for reasons best known to himself, the writer deliberately avoids naming himself directly. He does not identify himself as one of the two disciples who first followed Jesus (see ch. 1:37; cf. DA 138), and with obvious modesty refers to himself simply as “that disciple” (see ch. 21:23), “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (v. 20), “the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things” (v. 24). From the very first, Christian tradition has pointed to John the Beloved, not only as the source of information, but also as the actual writer of the gospel account that bears his name. For a discussion of the date of the writing of the Fourth Gospel, and the bearing of the date on the problem of authorship, see pp. 179-181.

John is distinguished above the rest of the Twelve as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (ch. 21:20). In his heart the flame of personal loyalty and ardent devotion to his Master seemed to burn purer and brighter than in the hearts of his fellows. Between him and Jesus there developed a more intimate friendship than the others knew (DA 292). As Christ alone could perfectly reveal the Father, being the only One who knew Him perfectly, so John was eminently qualified to present, in his Gospel, the sublime truths concerning Christ.

When John and his brother James first came to Christ they received the nickname “sons of thunder.” They were proud, self-assertive, ambitious for honor, impetuous, resentful under injury; they often harbored the desire for revenge, and took it when opportunity offered (AA 540, 541). These were serious defects indeed, and it is certain that John was not chosen to be a disciple because of a particularly winsome or noble character. But beneath this forbidding exterior Jesus discerned an ardent, sincere, loving heart. At first a rather dull pupil in whom the Master Teacher envisioned a dynamic apostle, John took upon himself the yoke of Christ, and as a result his entire life and character were transformed.

As John beheld in Jesus the One altogether lovely, he felt a supreme longing to become like Him. He was younger than the other disciples (DA 292), and with the confiding trust and hero worship of youth he opened his heart to Jesus. He was ever close by the side of his Master, yielded himself more fully to the influence of that perfect life, and as a result came to reflect it more fully than did his fellow disciples. His was the most receptive, the most teachable spirit. As in the pure light of the Sun of Righteousness his defects were revealed one by one, he humbled himself and accepted the reproof implicit in Christ’s perfect life and explicit in His words of counsel and reproof. Divine love and grace transformed him as he yielded his life to the Saviour’s influence.

John’s childhood home was Bethsaida, a fishing community on the northern shore of the Lake of Galilee. His father seems to have been a man of some means and social position, and his mother joined the group of devout women who ministered to the needs of Jesus and the Twelve on their journeys to and fro in Galilee and elsewhere in Palestine. John was a member of that inner circle of three whom Jesus made His most intimate associates and who shared with Him the deepest experiences of His life mission.

It was to John that Christ entrusted His own mother as He hung upon the cross. Tradition has it that many years later she accompanied the apostle to Ephesus, where he supervised the Christian communities of the region. John was the first of the disciples at the tomb on the resurrection morning, and the first to grasp the glorious truth that the Lord had risen (ch. 20:8). Thenceforth he devoted his all to the proclamation of a crucified, risen, and returning Saviour, bearing witness to what he had heard, seen, and experienced “of the Word of life” (1 John 1:1, 2).

3. Historical Setting. For a brief outline of the historical background of the life and mission of Jesus see p. 272. For a more complete discussion see pp. 41-67.

4. Theme. When the Gospel of John was written, toward the close of the 1st century, three major dangers threatened the life and purity of the Christian church. Most serious of these was waning piety; another was heresy, particularly Gnosticism, which denied the reality of the incarnation and spawned libertinism; and the third was persecution.

Some 30 years had passed since the writing of the Synoptic Gospels (see pp. 175-179), and the aged John, lone survivor of the Twelve (AA 542), was impressed to set forth anew the life of Christ, in such a way as to counteract the evil forces that threatened to destroy the church. Men needed a vivid picture of the Saviour to strengthen their faith in the reality of the great truths of the gospel such as the incarnation, the true deity and the true humanity, the perfect life, the atoning death, the glorious resurrection, and the promised return of Jesus. “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he [Christ] is pure” (1 John 3:3). Only when the life and mission of the Saviour are preserved a living reality in the mind and heart can the transforming power of His grace become effective in the life. Accordingly, John announces that his account was “written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (ch. 20:31). He frankly admits that he might have told much more (v. 30), but that he has reported only such incidents as he considers best adapted to certify the great fundamental truths of the gospel. He proceeded on the conviction that what had convinced him would convince others also (cf. 1 John 1:1-3).

As noted on page 179, the Gospel of John was formerly charged with having Gnostic tendencies. Christian Gnostic thought revolved around the concept that, in essence, good and evil are to be identified with spirit and matter, respectively. Those men in whose souls resides a spark of the heavenly light are said to be prisoners in this world of matter. Salvation consists in the knowledge of how to escape from the realm of matter into the realm of spirit. Gnosticism denied the true incarnation of Christ, holding that the human form men thought they saw, was an apparition. The divine Christ was supposed to have entered into the human Jesus at His baptism, and departed prior to His death on the cross.

These false concepts of sin and salvation John undoubtedly sought to meet, in part, by his account of the life of Jesus. Thirty years or so before this, Paul had written to the church at Colossae of the hidden dangers in what was then the new and intriguing cult of Gnosticism (Col. 2:8; cf. Acts 20:29, 30); John now faced a vigorous and increasingly popular philosophy that threatened the very life of the church.

With inspired good judgment John refrains from a direct attack on Gnosticism, and confines himself to a positive declaration of truth. It is noteworthy that—deliberately, it would seem—he avoids the use of certain Greek nouns such as *gnōsis*, *pistis*, and *sophia*, “knowledge,” “faith,” and “wisdom,” which were key words in the Gnostic’s vocabulary. He begins by stating in unmistakable language the true deity of Christ and the reality of

His incarnation. It appears that his selection of incidents was guided by the desire to present those aspects of Christ's life and ministry that reveal these fundamental truths most clearly.

With a few notable exceptions—the marriage at Cana, the visit to Sychar, the healing of the nobleman's son, the feeding of the 5,000, and the Sermon on the Bread of Life—John deals exclusively, and often at considerable length, with incidents that occurred in Judea and involved leaders of the Jewish nation. In this respect his Gospel supplements the Synoptics, which deal extensively with the Galilean ministry and pass over most of the incidents in Judea in relative silence.

John differs from the Synoptics in other ways. Extensive sections of his Gospel consist of long, controversial discourses in the Temple at Jerusalem. Also, several chapters are devoted to counsel imparted to the disciples on the night of the crucifixion. On the other hand, John says nothing of such important incidents as the baptism, the transfiguration, or the experience in Gethsemane. Nor does he give an instance of the cure of a demoniac. The miracles of which he does take note are specifically presented as evidences of divine power and contribute to his announced purpose of proving Jesus to be the Son of God. He recounts none of the synoptic parables. His aim is not so much biographical or historical as it is theological, yet there is much of both history and biography. Whereas the synoptic writers present the Messiahship of Jesus inductively, John boldly announces it in the very first chapter and then sets forth the evidence. Other significant differences lie in the Johannine and synoptic chronology of the life of Christ. If we had no more than the synoptic accounts we would probably conclude that His ministry extended over a period of not much more than one year, whereas John requires at least 2 1/2 years and implies full 3 1/2 years. John and the Synoptics also differ in their correlation of the last Passover with the crucifixion (see Additional Notes on Matt. 26, Note 1).

The key term of this Gospel is "Word," Gr. *Logos* (ch. 1:1), which, however, is used in its technical sense only in the introductory chapter. *Logos*, as a technical term, seems to have originated with the Stoics, who used it to denote divine wisdom as the integrating force of the universe. The Jewish philosopher Philo uses *logos* 1,300 times in his exposition of the OT. It has often been asserted that John uses the term *logos* in this philosophical sense. But John's *Logos* is strictly Christian. He presents Jesus as the incarnate expression of divine wisdom that made salvation possible, of the divine character and will, and of divine power active in the transformation of men's lives. John refers again and again to the fact that Jesus came as the living expression of the mind, will, and character of the Father, as in the 26 instances where he quotes Christ speaking of the Father as "him that sent me," or equivalent words, or in his use of a synonymous verb in referring to Christ's mission from the Father. He presents the Saviour of mankind as the Creator of all things, the Source of light and life. He also stresses the importance of believing the truth about Jesus, using the word "believe" or its equivalent more than 100 times. New and distinctly Christian in its concepts as the Gospel According to John is, 427 of its 879 verses are said to reflect the OT, either by way of direct quotation or by allusion.

5. Outline. In view of the fact that a full, chronological outline of the Gospel of John appears on pp. 196–201, the outline presented here covers only the major phases of the life and ministry of Jesus.

- I. Prologue: The Word of God Incarnate, 1:1–18.
- II. Early Ministry, Baptism to Passover, A.D. 27–28, 1:19 to 2:12.
- III. Judean Ministry, Passover to Passover, A.D. 28–29, 2:13 to 5:47.
 - A. At the first Passover, 2:13 to 3:21.
 - B. Ministry in Judea, 3:22–36.
 - C. Temporary withdrawal from Judea, 4:1–54.
 - D. At the second Passover, 5:1–47.
- IV. Galilean Ministry, Passover to Passover, A.D. 29–30, 6:1 to 7:1.
- V. Ministry, Passover to Passover, A.D. 30–31, 7:2 to 11:57.
 - A. At the Feast of Tabernacles, A.D. 30, 7:2 to 10:21.
 - B. At the Feast of Dedication, Winter A.D. 30–31, 10:22–42.
 - C. The raising of Lazarus, 11:1–57.
- VI. Closing Ministry at Jerusalem, Passover, A.D. 31, 12:1 to 19:42.
 - A. Events preceding Passion Week, 12:1–11.
 - B. Rejection by the Jewish leaders, 12:12–50.
 - C. The Last Supper, 13:1–30.
 - D. Parting counsel, 13:31 to 16:33.
 - E. Jesus’ intercessory prayer, 17:1–26.
 - F. Gethsemane, 18:1–12.
 - G. The trials, 18:13 to 19:16.
 - H. The crucifixion and burial, 19:17–42.
- VII. The Resurrection; Postresurrection Appearances, 20:1–29; 21:1–23.
- VIII. Epilogue, 20:30, 31; 21:24, 25.

CHAPTER 1

- 1 *The divinity, humanity, and office of Jesus Christ.* 15 *The testimony of John.* 39 *The calling of Andrew, Peter, &c.*

1. In the beginning. [*Prologue to John’s Gospel, John 1:1–18.*] The Greek phrase lacks the definite article, but is nevertheless definite in meaning. If the definite article were used in the Greek it would tend to imply some particular point of time, or “beginning.” Without the definite article, and in the context of vs. 1–3, the phrase denotes the most remote time conceivable, before the creation of “all things” (v. 3), before any and every other “beginning,” that is, eternity past.

The account of creation opens with the equivalent Hebrew words (see on Gen. 1:1). As Gen. 1 sets forth the nature of creation and the fact that man was originally formed in the image of God, so the prologue to the Gospel of John sets forth the nature of the Creator (vs. 1–4) and the means by which God purposed to make possible the re-creation of His image in man (vs. 5–14). Gen. 1:1 refers to “the beginning” of this world. But the “Word” of John 1:1–4 is the Creator of all things, and therefore antedates “the beginning” of Gen. 1:1. Thus “the beginning” of John 1:1 is prior to “the beginning” of Gen. 1:1. When everything that had a beginning began, the “Word” already “was.”

Was. Gr. *ēn*, a form of the verb *eimi*, “to be,” expressing continuity of existence, or *being*. The Word *was*, throughout all eternity; He never *became* such. But, in time, the

Word “was made [literally, “became,” Gr. *egeneto*, a form of *ginomai*, “to become,” expressing action initiated and completed at a given time] flesh” (v. 14). Thus, Christ has ever *been* God (John 1:1; Heb. 1:8); but, in contrast, He *became* man (John 1:14; cf. Phil. 2:7). Thus, both in the words and in their form, John stresses the continuous, timeless, unlimited existence of Christ prior to His incarnation. In eternity past there was no point before which it could be said that the Word was not. The Son was “with the Father from all eternity” (AA 39). “There never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God” (Ev 615). Compare Rev. 22:13, where Jesus proclaims Himself “the beginning and the end.” He is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8).

The word *ginomai*, used in v. 14, appears also in v. 3 of the creation of all things (literally, “by him everything *became*”). Jesus declared, “Before Abraham was [Gr. *ginomai*, literally, “became,” or “came to be”], I am [Gr. *eimi*]” (ch. 8:58). The same contrast appears in the LXX of Ps. 90:2: “Before the mountains came into being [Gr. *ginomai*], from age to age thou art [Gr. *eimi*] God.”

Ēn occurs three times in John 1:1, first of the eternity of the Word, then of His eternal fellowship with the Father, and finally of His eternal equality of nature with the Father. Verse 2 reaffirms the duration of this state of being throughout all eternity.

Word. Gr. *logos*, “utterance,” “saying,” “speech,” “narrative,” “account,” “treatise,” with emphasis on the systematic, meaningful arrangement of the thoughts thus expressed. Here John uses the term as a designation for Christ, who came to reveal the character, mind, and will of the Father, even as speech is the expression of ideas. In the LXX the word *logos* is commonly used of both creative (Ps. 33:6; cf. Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, etc.) and communicative (Jer. 1:4; Eze. 1:3; Amos 3:1) expressions of the divine mind and will. No doubt these OT uses of *logos* were in the mind of John as he wrote. God has expressed His divine will and purpose through creation and through revelation; now (John 1:14) He has done so through the incarnation, His supreme and perfect revelation (see EGW Supplementary Material on v. 18). The word *Logos* thus epitomizes the dominant theme of the book of John (see ch. 14:8–10; also below under “Word was God”; also Additional Note on Chapter 1). In v. 18 John states his reason for speaking of Christ as “the Word”—He came to “declare” the Father. As a designation for Christ the word *Logos* is used in the NT only by John, in his Gospel (ch. 1) and in 1 John 1:1; Rev. 19:13. The term identifies Christ as the incarnate expression of the will of the Father that all men should be saved (see 1 Tim. 2:4), as “God’s thought made audible” (DA 19).

With God. Gr. *pros ton theon*. The word *pros* denotes close association and fellowship. Had John meant simply that in the beginning the Word was in proximity to God, he might have been expected to use either the word *para*, “beside,” or the word *meta*, “with” (cf. on ch. 6:46). But John intended more than either of these words would convey, as when he wrote, “we have an advocate *with* [Gr. *pros*] the Father” (1 John 2:1)—not in the sense that Jesus is simply in the Father’s presence, but that He is closely associated with the Father in the work of salvation. *Pros* is used in the same sense in Heb.

4:13: “*with* whom we have to do,” that is, “with whom we have dealings.” The word here implies close personal fellowship in an enterprise of mutual interest and concern. Compare John 17:5.

The fact that the Word was “with God,” that is, with the Father, emphatically declares Him to be a being altogether distinct from the Father. As the context makes clear, the Word was associated with God in a unique and exclusive sense. The Word was “with God” in the eternity past, but He became “flesh” in order to be with “us” (see on v. 14; cf. DA 23–26). He was Immanuel, “God with us” (see on Matt. 1:23). It is impossible to understand the import of the incarnation except against the background of the eternal pre-existence of Christ as God and as associated with God (see EGW Supplementary Material on Rom. 1:20–25).

Word was God. The absence, in the Greek, of the definite article before the word “God” makes it impossible to render the statement, “God was the Word.” Thus to render it would equate God with the Word and thus limit Deity exclusively to the Word. The two terms, “Word” and “God,” are not altogether interchangeable. It would be no more proper to say that “God was the Word” than to say that “love is God” (cf. 1 John 4:16), or, “flesh was made the Word” (cf. John 1:14). Although here in v. 1 the word “God” lacks the definite article, it is still definite. The statement cannot be translated “the Word was *a* God,” as if the Word were one God among many other gods. In Greek the absence of the article often emphasizes quality expressed by, or inherent in, a word. Accordingly, John means that the Word partook of the essence of Deity, that He was divine in the ultimate and absolute sense. Thus in one terse declaration John denies that the Word was either *a* God, one among many, or *the* God, as if He alone were God.

In the prologue (vs. 1–18) John states the objective that guided him in writing the Gospel; namely, to present the man Jesus as God incarnate (cf. 1 John 1:1). From incident to incident and discourse to discourse he faithfully pursues this objective. In his conclusion he observes that his purpose in writing was to lead others to “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,” and that believing they “might have life through his name” (John 20:30, 31). In the introduction to his first epistle John again refers to his personal experiences with “the Word” (1 John 1:1–3). Likewise the opening words of the Revelation declare it to be “the Revelation of Jesus Christ” (ch. 1:1). See Additional Note at end of chapter; see on Phil. 2:6–8; Col. 2:9.

Christ is eternally God in the supreme and unqualified sense of the term (see Additional Note at end of chapter). For comment on the fiction that Jesus was merely a great and good man see on Matt. 16:16.

Evidences of the deity of Christ are many and irrefutable. These may be summed up briefly: (1) the life He lived (Heb. 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22), (2) the words He spoke (John 7:46; 14:10; cf. Matt. 7:29), (3) the miracles He wrought (John 5:20; 14:11), (4) the prophecies He fulfilled (Luke 24:26, 27, 44; John 5:39; DA 799). See DA 406, 407.

2. The same. Verse 2 repeats the essential facts of v. 1, for emphasis.

3. All things. A common philosophical phrase denoting the entire universe (see 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; cf. Heb. 1:1, 2; see on John 1:9).

Were made. Gr. *ginomai*, “became,” “came into being,” “came to be” (see on v. 1). John describes creation as a completed act. Material things are not eternal; there was a time when they “were made.”

By him. John was not thinking of the Logos, or “Word,” in the abstract, metaphysical sense of Greek philosophy. The association of Christ with the Father in the work of creation is set forth again and again in the NT (see Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16, 17; Heb. 1:1, 2; cf. Rev. 3:14). Here John presents Christ as the Creator of all things, as in John 1:14 he sets Him forth as the agent of divine mercy and grace for the restoration, or re-creation, of all things. In eternity past the Word was not a passive, inactive entity, but was actively and intimately associated with the Father in the development and administration of “all things.”

Without him. The same truth stated negatively. Uniquely and exclusively, the “Word” is Creator.

4. Life. Gr. *zōē*, the life principle shared by all living things, the antithesis of death. John evidently thinks also of spiritual life and, more particularly, of everlasting life, to which the one who receives Christ and believes in Him is given access (see v. 12). Through sin man separated himself from the source of life, and therefore became subject to death, but the prospect of eternal life was restored through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:12, 18; 6:23), and with it all that Adam lost through transgression. See John 10:10; 11:25; 14:6. “In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived” (DA 530).

The light of men. In Greek the definite article preceding both “life” and “light” equates “light” with “life.” Spiritual darkness had long shrouded men’s souls, but the “true Light” (v. 9) of divine life and perfection now shines forth to illumine the pathway of every man (cf. Isa. 9:1, 2). Not only does the light of Heaven shine forth *through* Christ, He *is* that light (John 1:9). Again and again John quotes Jesus to this effect (see John 8:12; 9:5; 12:35, 46; cf. 1 John 1:5, 6; 2:8). Light has ever been a symbol of the divine presence (see on Gen. 1:3). As the first act of creation God flooded the world with light (Gen. 1:3), so when God sets about the work of recreating His image in the souls of men He first illumines their hearts and minds with the light of divine love (2 Cor. 4:6). “With thee,” says the psalmist, “is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light” (Ps. 36:9).

5. The light. That is, the light of divine love manifested in the incarnate Word (see on v. 4).

Darkness. That is, the moral darkness of sin, the mental darkness of ignorance concerning the love and mercy of God and the hopeless prospect of death (see Eph. 2:12). It was to dispel this pall of darkness that the Light of life came into the world (see 2 Cor. 4:6).

Comprehended. Gr. *katalambanō*, “to apprehend,” “to seize,” “to comprehend,” whether literally with the hands or figuratively with the mind. *Katalambanō* is used in the sense of “perceive” or “comprehend” in Acts 10:34; 25:25; Eph. 3:18, but more often in the sense of “take,” “overtake,” or “seize” in Mark 9:18; John 8:3, 4; 12:35; 1 Thess. 5:4; etc. The English word “apprehend” reflects both shades of meaning. The translation “overcome” (RSV) conveys the idea of good triumphant over evil (cf. Eph. 6:12; Col. 2:15). This translation was possibly influenced by the modernist concept that the Gospel of John reflects the dualism of Mithraism and the Essenes (see pp. 54, 92). However, the development of thought in John 1:9–12 favors the translation “comprehend,” in the sense that the personified darkness of men’s souls neither understood nor appreciated the Light of life (ch. 3:19; cf. DA 80).

6. Sent from God. In these dramatic words the evangelist affirms the divine origin of the Baptist's witness concerning the Messiah (see on John 1:23; cf. on Amos 7:14, 15; John 4:34).

John. That is, John the Baptist. John the evangelist never refers to himself by name. See on Matt. 3:1–12; Luke 3:1–18. For the meaning of the name see on Luke 1:13.

7. Bear witness. In their state of spiritual blindness men in general were oblivious to the light and not receptive of it (vs. 10, 26). His spiritual perception, however, led John to recognize the Messiah (vs. 32–34). Compare Isa. 6:9; 2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 3:17, 18.

Light. Gr. *phōs*, a source of light. As the context makes evident, Christ is here said to be the light, as in v. 4 He is said to be the bearer of light (see on vs. 4, 5).

Believe. This word appears in the Gospel of John more than 100 times, stressing the vital importance of a positive response to the voice of God.

8. He was not that Light. See on v. 20.

9. The true Light. All other so-called “light” than that which originates with Jesus Christ is false (cf. Isa. 50:11; James 1:17). However it is probable that John does not here use the word “true” in contradistinction to “false,” implying that all other lights are false and misleading, for Christ later spoke of John the Baptist as “a burning and a shining light [Gr. *luchnos*, “lamp,” “light bearer,” in contradistinction to *phōs*, the light itself, see on v. 7]” (ch. 5:35). But John the apostle denies (ch. 1:8) that John the Baptist was “that Light” of which he here speaks. The difference between John the Baptist and Jesus was not the difference between false and true, but between partial and complete (see 1 Cor. 13:10). The witness of John might be likened to the brilliance of the planet Venus, or to that of Sirius (see on Isa. 14:12), but in Jesus the light of truth blazed forth like the noonday sun (see on Mal. 4:2; 2 Peter 1:19). John also sets Jesus forth as the “true bread” (ch. 6:32), the “true vine” (ch. 15:1), the true “door” (ch. 10:7–9), and as truth itself (ch. 14:6).

Lighteth every man. This does not mean that all men are necessarily illuminated by the light, but that if men are illuminated at all it must be by means of this light (cf. John 6:68; Acts 4:12). All the light that men have comes from Christ (DA 464, 465). The true light shines upon all men in the same sense that Jesus died for all men, but this does not mean that all men know about Him or that they will be saved. John here refers, not to a vague spark of light resident in the souls of all men, saints, sinners, and heathen alike, but to the light of a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ (see DA 317). John makes clear in vs. 10–12 that, for the most part, “the world knew him not” and “his own received him not.” These, then, were not illuminated by the “true Light.” As John hastens to add, it is only “as many as received him” and believed in Him who are here particularly designated (v. 12; cf. DA 317).

That cometh. In the Greek this clause may refer either to “every man” (KJV) or to “the true light” (RSV). In ch. 3:19 light is again referred to as coming into the world. In chs. 5:43; 7:28; 10:10; 16:28; 18:37 (cf. chs. 1:31; 6:14; 11:27) Jesus refers to His own coming, not as a babe in Bethlehem, but in His role as the Messiah. In ch. 12:46 Jesus says, “I am come a light into the world.”

In ch. 1:10, John states that Christ, “the true Light,” was *in* the world. Would it not be appropriate for him to mention His coming *into* the world in the preceding verse? Some have suggested that if the clause, “that cometh into the world,” refers to “every man,” it would be redundant, whereas if it refers to “the true Light,” it would seem to add

meaning to the statement and prepare the way for the incarnation declaration of v. 14. However, the KJV reading is fully as valid grammatically.

The world. Gr. *kosmos*, generally the “world” from the viewpoint of its harmonious arrangement (see on Matt. 4:8). John uses *kosmos* some 80 times, as compared with only 15 in the three Synoptics, and by it designates the world of men, particularly those who oppose God and truth.

10. In the world. That is, among men. See on v. 9.

Made by him. See on v. 3.

Knew him not. That is, “the world” did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah, “the true Light.” Not only so; it rejected and crucified Him. See on v. 11.

11. His own. Gr. *ta idia*, an idiomatic expression here meaning “his own [home]” (see John 16:32; 19:27; Acts 21:6; EGW Supplementary Material on John 1:1–3, 14). This is probably not a direct allusion to Jesus’ rejection at Nazareth, His literal “home,” but to “the house of Israel” collectively (Matt. 10:6; 15:24; cf. Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6), the chosen nation. The second occurrence of the expression “his own,” *hoi idioi*, is in the plural, meaning “his own [people].” Although Jesus’ own brothers (John 7:3–5) and fellow townsmen (Luke 4:28, 29) denied His Messiahship, John here probably refers to the members of “the house of Israel” individually, and particularly to its leaders. These were “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 15:24).

Received him not. The Fourth Gospel is sometimes called the Gospel of Rejection because it traces more fully than do the other Gospels the process by which the leaders of Israel rejected the Messiah (see chs. 3:11; 5:43; 6:66; 8:13; 9:29; 10:25; 12:37, 42; 19:15; etc.). To be sure, many sincere hearts here and there “received him” (ch. 1:12; see chs. 2:11; 3:2; 4:29, 39, 42, 53; 6:14; 7:31, 40, 41, 43; 8:30; 10:19, 42; 11:45; etc.).

12. As many as received. Not merely as a good man or even as a prophet, but as the Son of God, the Sent of God, the Messiah. John here brands as error the belief that simply because Christ died for all men, all will therefore be saved. Marked equally false is the belief that God predestines certain men to be saved and others to be damned. John emphatically declares that the decisive factor lies with men themselves—“as many” as receive and believe are granted access to sonship. Concerning predestination see further on Isa. 55:1; Eph. 1:5; Rev. 22:17.

Power. Gr. *exousia*, “authority,” “right,” “power of choice,” not *dunamis*, “power” in the usual sense. In ch. 5:27 *exousia* is rightly translated “authority.” Because of sin man had lost all his rights and deserved the penalty of death. The plan of salvation restored man’s opportunity to know God and to choose to serve Him.

To become. God does not arbitrarily *make* men His sons; He enables them to *become* such if they so choose.

Sons of God. Literally, “children of God,” which expression is a favorite with John (see John 11:52; 1 John 3:1, 2, 10; 5:2), who never, in the Greek, uses “sons of God” when referring to Christians. To become a son, or child, of God is to enter into the covenant relationship (see on Hosea 1:10) by the new birth (John 3:3).

Them that believe. See on v. 7.

On his name. To believe on the name of another is not equivalent to believing *him*. The latter may simply mean that one gives credence to the words of another. The devils

give credence to the fact that there is one God (James 2:19), but this is a very different experience from believing “on the name of God.” The former is an intellectual act; the latter a moral and spiritual one. To believe on the name of Christ is to appropriate the provisions of salvation in Christ Jesus. “Faith is the condition upon which God has seen fit to promise pardon to sinners; not that there is any virtue in faith whereby salvation is merited, but faith can lay hold of the merits of Christ, the remedy provided for sin” (EGW RH Nov. 4, 1890).

The word “name” is here used in an Aramaic idiomatic sense, meaning the person himself.

13. Born. See on ch. 3:3–8.

Not of Blood. That is, not by physical birth.

Will of the flesh. Perhaps sexual desire.

Man. Gr. *anēr*, “a male,” probably here a reference to the desire for posterity.

Of God. Human motives and human planning play no part in the birth of which John speaks. It resembles physical birth only in the sense that both mark the beginning of new life (see on John 3:3–8; Rom. 6:3–5). It is not accomplished through human initiative and action, but is altogether a new creation, wholly dependent upon the will and action of God Himself. He it is who works in us “both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). John does not exclude the free choice of man with respect to conversion (see on v. 12), nor does he deny the need for human cooperation with divine agencies. He simply affirms that the initiative and the power are God’s.

14. Made flesh. Finite understanding halts at the threshold of infinite love, wisdom, and power—baffled and unable to go further. Paul speaks of the incarnation as a great mystery (1 Tim. 3:16). To stray beyond the bounds of what Inspiration has made known is to delve into mysteries the human mind lacks capacity to comprehend. See on John 6:51; 16:28.

John has already affirmed the true deity of Christ (see on v. 1), and now affirms His true humanity. Christ is divine in the absolute and unqualified sense of the word; He is also human in the same sense, except that He “knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21). The Scriptures repeatedly and emphatically proclaim this fundamental truth (see Luke 1:35; Rom. 1:3; 8:3; Gal. 4:4; Phil. 2:6–8; Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:2, 8; 2:14–18; 10:5; 1 John 1:2; etc.; see on Phil. 2:6–8; Col. 2:9). Though Christ was originally “in the form of God” He “did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself,” and, “being born in the likeness of men,” was “found in human form” (Phil. 2:6–8, RSV). In Him was “all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9); nevertheless, “in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren” (Heb. 2:17). “From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father,” but “He chose to give back the scepter into the Father’s hands, and to step down from the throne of the universe,” in order “that He might dwell among us, and make us familiar with His divine character and life” (DA 19, 22, 23).

The two natures, the divine and the human, were mysteriously blended into one person. Divinity was clothed with humanity, not exchanged for it. In no sense did Christ cease to be God when He became man. The two natures became closely and inseparably one, yet each remained distinct. The human nature was not changed into the divine nature, nor the divine nature into the human. See Additional Note at end of chapter; see

on Matt. 1:1; Luke 1:35; Phil. 2:6–8; Heb. 2:14–17; see EGW Supplementary Material on John 1:1–3, 14; Mark 16:6; Phil. 2:6–8; Col. 2:9; Heb. 2:14–17.

Christ “assumed the liabilities of human nature” (EGW ST Aug. 2, 1905), but His humanity was nevertheless “perfect” (DA 664). Although, as a man, He could have sinned, no taint of, or inclination to, corruption rested upon Him; He had no propensity toward sin (EGW letter 8, 1895, see p. 1128). He was “tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (see on Heb. 4:15). See Additional Note at end of chapter.

Dwelt. Gr. *skēnoō*, literally, “tended,” or “pitched [his] tent,” among us (cf. DA 23). Christ became one of us the better to reveal the Father’s love, to share our experiences, to set us an example, to succor us in temptation, to suffer for our sins, and to represent us before the Father (see on Heb. 2:14–17). The eternal Word, who had ever been with the Father (see on John 1:1). was now to become Immanuel, “God with us” (see on Matt. 1:23).

Glory. Gr. *doxa*, here equivalent to the Heb. *kabod*, which is used in the OT of the sacred “glory” of the abiding presence of the Lord, the Shekinah (see on Gen. 3:24; Ex. 13:21; cf. on 1 Sam. 4:22). The LXX has *doxa* 177 times for *kabod*. John and his fellow disciples bore eyewitness testimony to the historical fact that “the Word was made flesh” (John 1:14; see ch. 21:24; 1 John 1:1, 2). Here John doubtless thinks particularly of experiences such as the Transfiguration, when divinity momentarily flashed through humanity. Peter similarly speaks of being an “eyewitness” to the “majesty” and “excellent glory” of Christ at the Transfiguration (2 Peter 1:16–18). This glory, Peter adds, accompanied the declaration, “This is my beloved Son.” For various occasions during the life of Jesus when the glory of Heaven illumined His countenance see on Luke 2:48. In John 17:5 Jesus prays the Father, “Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” The Christian faith rests upon the fact that this divine “glory” rested upon a historical person, Jesus of Nazareth. Secondly, John may also have in mind the perfection of character exemplified by the Saviour (see below under “Grace and truth”).

The only begotten. Gr. *monogenēs*, from two words meaning “only” and “kind,” and thus properly translated “unique,” “only,” “only one of a kind.” As with the title *Logos* (see on v. 1), only John uses the word *monogenēs* of Christ (see John 1:18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9). Absence of the definite article in the Greek either makes *monogenēs* indefinite, “an only one,” or makes it an expression of quality, in which case John would be saying, “glory as of an only one [who had come] from beside the Father.” This seems evidently the sense here. See on Luke 7:12; 8:42, where *monogenēs* is translated “only.”

In Heb. 11:17 *monogenēs* is used of Isaac, who was by no means Abraham’s “only begotten,” or even his first-born. But he was *the* son of the promise, and as such, the one destined to succeed his father as heir to the birthright (Gen. 25:1–6; Gal. 4:22, 23). “Similarly in respect to the five texts in John’s writings of Christ, the translation should be one of the following: ‘unique,’ ‘precious,’ ‘only,’ ‘sole,’ ‘the only one of his kind,’ but not ‘only begotten’” (*Problems in Bible Translation*, p. 198).

The translation “only begotten,” here and elsewhere, apparently originated with the early Fathers of the Catholic Church, and entered early English translations of the Bible

under the influence of the Latin Vulgate, the official Bible of the Catholic Church. Accurately reflecting the Greek, various Old Latin manuscripts which antedate the Vulgate read “only” rather than “only begotten.” The idea that Christ “was *born* of the Father before all creation” appears first in the writings of Origen, about A.D. 230. Arius, nearly a century later, is the first to use *gegennemenon*, the correct Greek word for “begotten,” when speaking of Christ, and to affirm that He was “begotten of God before all ages” (see Additional Note at end of chapter). This Greek word is never used in the Bible concerning the preincarnate Christ. The idea that Christ was “begotten” by the Father at some time in eternity past is altogether foreign to the Scriptures. For a detailed discussion of this subject see *Problems in Bible Translation*, pp. 197–204.

Properly understood of Christ’s unique status as *the* Son of God, the word *monogenēs* distinguishes between Him and all others who, through faith in Him, are given “power to become the sons of God” (v. 12), and who are specifically declared to be “born ... of God” (v. 13). Christ is, and always has been, very “God” (see on v. 1), and by virtue of this fact we “*become* the sons of God” when we receive Christ and believe on His name.

The statement of v. 14 obviously deals with the incarnation, and its purpose is to emphasize the fact that the incarnate Word retained the divine nature, as evidenced by the manifestation of the preincarnate divine glory (see ch. 17:5). Although the word *monogenēs* means strictly “unique,” or “only,” rather than “only begotten,” John nevertheless here applies it to Christ at His incarnation, to the time when “the Word was made flesh” in order to dwell among us. Paul confirms this application in Heb. 1:5, 6, where he links the words *gegenneka*, “have I begotten” (from *gennaō*, “to beget”), and *prōtotoktos*, “first-born” (from *pro*, “before,” and *tikō*, “to beget”), to the time “when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world.” It seems therefore wholly unwarranted to understand *monogenēs* as referring to a mysterious begetting of “the Word” at some point of time in eternity past. For a discussion of Christ as the Son of God see on Luke 1:35; and as the Son of man, see on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10; see also EGW Supplementary Material on Phil. 2:6–8; Col. 2:9.

Of the Father. Gr. *para theou*, literally “with the Father,” or “beside the Father,” here probably with the force of “*from* beside the Father.” The Greek preposition *para* sometimes has the force of *ek*, “out of,” “from,” which here agrees best with the context. The incarnate Logos had come forth from the presence of the Father when He entered this world. See on ch. 6:46.

Full of. This clearly applies to the Word incarnate. Dwelling on earth as a man among men, the Word was “full of grace and truth.”

Grace and truth. Gr. *charis kai alētheia*. *Charis* here means “good will,” “loving-kindness,” “[undeserved] favor,” “mercy.” *Alētheia* refers to the “truth” about the love of God the Father for sinners as revealed in the plan of salvation and in the incarnate Saviour. Here, *charis* is equivalent to the Heb. *chesed* (see Additional Note on Psalm 36; see on Job 10:12), as *alētheia* is to the Heb. *’emeth*, “faithfulness,” “trustworthiness.” As “mercy” and “truth,” these words appear together in the OT in a clearly Messianic

setting, in Ps. 85:10, 11. It was precisely these attributes of God that Christ came particularly to reveal. While on earth He was “full” of them, and could thus give a full and complete revelation of the Father. God is ever faithful to His own character, and His character is revealed most completely in His mercy, or grace.

Fifteen centuries prior to the incarnation God had instructed Israel to build Him a “sanctuary,” or tent, that He might “dwell among them” (Ex. 25:8). As, in times past, the divine presence had appeared in the form of the Shekinah glory above the mercy seat over the ark and elsewhere (see on Gen. 3:24; Ex. 13:21), so now the same glory had been manifested in the person of Jesus. To this fact John and his fellow disciples bore eyewitness, and to them this was incontestable evidence that Jesus had come forth from the Father. Such glory could have come from no other source.

It is worthy of note that in Hebrew the words *mishkan*, “dwelling place,” “tent,” “tabernacle,” and *Shekinah*, the glorious “abiding Presence,” are both derived from *shakan*, “to dwell,” “to abide.” In Greek, *skēnē*, “tent” “tabernacle,” is similarly related to *skēnoō*, “to tent,” “to tabernacle,” and thus “to dwell,” or “to abide.” In times past the divine glory, the holy “Presence,” had dwelt among the chosen people in the literal tabernacle; now, John says, the same glorious “Presence,” God Himself, had come to dwell among His people in the person of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. It is thought that the “glory” of which Paul speaks in Rom. 9:4 is to be identified with the Shekinah glory, as possibly also the “bright cloud” that appeared at the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:5). In the clearly Messianic passage of Isa. 11:1–10 the coming of Messiah is foretold, and of Him it is said that, literally, “his abiding shall be glorious.” According to Ps. 85:9, 10, the day of salvation would bring again the “glory” of God to “dwell” in the land, and at that time “mercy [or grace, Heb. *chesed*, see Additional Note on Psalm 36] and truth [Heb. *’emeth*, “faithfulness,” “trustworthiness”]” would meet together (see DA 762). The same two words, *chesed* and *’emeth*, “merciful” and “gracious” are linked together in the proclamation of the “name” of the Lord, when Moses was allowed to behold His “glory [Heb. *chabod*]” (see on Ex. 33:22; 34:6). These and other Messianic passages of the OT find a very close parallel here in John 1:14, where, at the incarnation, glory that could have come only from the presence of the Father was manifested in the incarnate Word and “dwelt among us,” “full of grace [mercy] and truth.”

Every major aspect of Christ’s life played an important part in the work of salvation. His virgin *birth* reunited the estranged families of earth and heaven. He brought Deity down to earth in order that He might bear humanity with Him back to heaven. His perfect *life* as a man provides us with an example of obedience (John 15:10; 1 John 2:6) and sanctification (John 17:19); as God, He imparts to us power to obey (Rom. 8:3, 4). His vicarious *death* made it possible for us to enjoy a period of probation (CS 137) and for Him to justify “many” (Isa. 53:5, 11; Rom. 5:9; Titus 2:14). By faith in His death we are made free from the *guilt* of sin, and by faith in His life, from its *power* (Rom. 5:1, 10; Phil. 4:7). His glorious *resurrection* assures us that one day we too shall “put on” immortality (1 Cor. 15:12–22, 51–55). His *ascension* confirms His promise to return and take us with Him to meet the Father (John 14:1–3; Acts 1:9–11), and thereby complete

the work of saving “his people.” These five aspects of Christ’s mission to earth were all the subject of prophecy (Isa. 9:6, 7; 53; 61:1–3; Ps. 68:18).

15. John bare witness. Literally, “John bears witness,” or “John testifies.” More than a half a century had passed since the martyrdom of John the Baptist, but his witness to the Christ echoed on down the years. It was true of him as it was of Abel, that “he being dead yet speaketh” (Heb. 11:4). See John 1:19–36; 3:27–36; see on Matt. 3:11, 12; Luke 3:15.

This was he. The Baptist identifies Jesus as the one of whom he had spoken since the beginning of his ministry (see vs. 27, 30).

After me. That is, in point of time. Jesus did not come “after” John in the sense that the disciples, as learners, followed “after” Jesus (see on Matt. 10:37, 38).

Is preferred. Literally, “is become,” or here, “takes precedence.” John never questioned the superior rank and dignity of the Messiah. See ch. 3:28–31.

Before me. Gr. *emprosthen mou*, “in front of me,” that is, in relative greatness.

He was before me. That is, in point of time. Here, for the word “before” John uses *opisō*, whereas in the preceding clause he uses *emprosthen*. In view of the fact that John was about six months older than Jesus, reference here is clearly to Jesus’ preincarnate existence.

Some translators and commentators consider v. 15 an interpolation that interrupts the line of thought between vs. 14, 16. However, the apostle manifestly introduces the testimony of the Baptist at this point to confirm that of the disciples already mentioned in v. 14, as to Christ’s exalted position and pre-existence. The importance attached by the early church to the witness of John the Baptist reflects the express statements of our Lord Himself (see John 5:32–36; cf. Matt. 11:11).

16. His fulness. See on John 1:14; cf. Col. 1:19; 2:9; Eph 3:19; 4:13.

Grace for grace. Probably meaning, “grace added to grace.” Day by day every true believer goes to the heavenly storehouse for divine grace sufficient to meet the needs of the day. Daily he grows in grace and in understanding God’s purpose for his life (cf. 2 Peter 3:18). He advances steadily toward the goal of a perfect character (see Matt. 5:48).

17. The law. That is, the system of revealed religion under which the Jews lived in OT times, divinely ordained but gradually perverted by human tradition (see on Mark 7:9–13). In the days of Christ the term “law” included not only the Decalogue but all that Moses and the prophets had written (Luke 24:27, 44)—*as interpreted by the rabbis*. In and of itself, as originally given by God, “the law” was good (cf. Rom. 3:1, 2). It was designed to lead men to salvation through faith in the coming Messiah (John 5:39, 45–47; Luke 24:25–27, 44). The fact that “some did not believe” (Rom. 3:3), but sought salvation “by the works of the law” (ch. 9:32) rather than by faith, and as a result failed to enter into the spiritual rest God intended for them (Heb. 3:18, 19; 4:2), does not mean that the system itself as ordained by God was faulty. All that God does is “perfect” (Deut. 32:4). Many there were in OT times who “obtained a good report through faith” (Heb. 11:39). In fact, there never has been any other way to obtain a “good report” than “through faith.”

Concerning the manner in which human tradition had perverted the plan of salvation by emphasizing the forms of religion rather than its spiritual and moral objectives see on Mark 7:1–13. For Christ’s exposition of the true spirit of the law as applied to the problems of daily living see on Matt. 5:17–22. For a discussion of the word “law” itself see on Gal. 3:24. Concerning the means of salvation in OT times see on Eze. 16:60.

By Moses. Literally, “through Moses.” “The law” did not originate with Moses, but with God. Moses was simply the agent through whom the revealed will of God was imparted to men (see Deut. 5:22 to 6:1; Heb. 1:1).

But. This word has been supplied by the translators. It implies a stronger contrast between “law” and “grace” than John apparently intended. John does not mean to imply that the system revealed through Moses was bad, as compared with that now revealed through Christ, but that, good as Moses’ system was, that of Christ’s is better (see Heb. 7:22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34).

Grace and truth. See on vs. 14, 16. These divine attributes were inherent in the system of revealed religion in OT times (see Ex. 34:6, 7), but had, for practical purposes, been lost under a thick layer of human tradition. The contrast between “law” and “grace” is not so much a contrast between the system of religion in OT times, which looked forward to a coming Messiah, and that revealed by Christ (cf. Heb. 1:1, 2), as between the perverted interpretation placed upon the revealed grace and truth of God by the official exponents of the law, the rabbis (cf. Rom. 6:14, 15; Gal. 5:4), and the truth as revealed through Jesus Christ.

By affirming that “truth” comes through Christ, John identifies Him as the *reality* toward whom pointed all OT types and ceremonies, which were no more than a shadow of better things to come. Type met antitype in Christ (Col. 2:16, 17). In no sense does John imply that the OT system was false or in error.

By Jesus Christ. It was Christ who had spoken through Moses and the prophets (1 Peter 1:9, 10; PP 366). Now He appeared in person to reaffirm the great eternal truths revealed to these holy men of old, and to restore them to their original luster, untarnished by human tradition (see on Matt. 5:17–19). He came to reveal the Father in His true character (cf. Ex. 34:6, 7), to prevail upon men to practice justice and mercy and to be humble before God (Micah 6:6–8). He who “spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets” now spoke to men through His own Son (Heb. 1:1, 2).

Here, for the first time, John refers to our Lord by the historical name, Jesus Christ (see on Matt. 1:1). The eternal “Word” has become incarnate, a man among men, and John henceforth speaks of Him as such.

18. No man hath seen God. That is, the Father (cf. PP 366). Sinners cannot see God face to face and live. Not even Moses, the great lawgiver of Israel, was permitted to behold Him (Ex. 33:20; Deut. 4:12). Some have witnessed the glory of the divine presence (see on John 1:14), but, except in vision, none have seen the divine person (cf. Isa. 6:5). Christ came to reveal the Father, and, for all practical purposes, those who saw Him saw the Father (John 14:7–11). See also chs. 5:37; 6:46.

Son. See on chs. 1:14; 3:16. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between the readings “Son” and “God.” Either way, reference would be to Christ. If the reading “God” is accepted, the sense would then be: “the unique one, very God, the one abiding in the bosom of the Father,” or, “the only one [who is] God, the one who abides in the bosom of the Father.”

In the bosom. Probably an idiomatic expression indicating the most intimate association possible (cf. ch. 13:23). He who knows the Father best is the very one who came from heaven to make Him known to men (ch. 14:7–9).

Hath declared. Gr. *exegōmai*, “to lead forth,” “to unfold [in teaching],” “to reveal,” “to interpret.” Our word “exegesis” is from the same Greek word.

19. The record of John. [*Jesus Declared “the Lamb of God,”* John 1:19–34. See Early Ministry and Baptism to First Passover.] That is, his testimony concerning the Christ, on: (1) the day the delegation from Jerusalem came to investigate him (vs. 19–28), (2) the day following, when he publicly identified Jesus as “the Lamb of God” (vs. 29–34), and (3) the third day, when he privately introduced two of his own disciples to Jesus (vs. 35, 36). John the evangelist begins his gospel narrative with an account of the witness of the forerunner to the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth. Compare Matt. 3:1, 2; Mark 1:1–4; Luke 3:1–6; Acts 10:37, 38; see on Luke 3:15–18.

When the Jews sent. That is, the Sanhedrin, the supreme Jewish authority of the time (cf. chs. 5:15–18; 7:13; 9:22; 18:12; see p. 67). The questions now put to John reflect the high esteem in which he was held by the people generally (Matt. 14:5; 21:26), and the serious attention given by the leaders to the popular belief that he was a prophet, and might, perhaps, even be the Messiah (see Luke 3:15). The extent of John’s influence is apparent from the fact that his audience included not only vast throngs of the common people (Matt. 3:5), but the religious (v. 7) and political (see Matt. 14:4; DA 214) leaders of the nation as well. Excitement had reached such a height that the Sanhedrin could no longer evade the issue. The people had no doubt pressed their leaders for an answer to the very questions with which the delegation now challenged John. Presumably (see on John 1:25), the leaders would acknowledge the right of a prophet, as a spokesman direct from God, to teach without their authorization, once the validity of his credentials was established (see on Matt. 12:38; 16:1). Otherwise, they exercised the right to control all public teaching (see Mishnah *Sanhedrin* 11, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, pp. 558–600).

Priests and Levites. See on Ex. 28:1; Deut. 10:8. Although most of the priests and Levites were Sadducees, this delegation was composed of Pharisees (see on John 1:24), perhaps because they felt more concern over the matter. Similarly, it was the Pharisees who later harassed Jesus. Perhaps priests and Levites were assigned to investigate John out of consideration for the fact that his father had been a priest, and his mother the daughter of a priest (Luke 1:5). John was himself eligible to the priesthood, and thus to become a teacher.

From Jerusalem. Perhaps some 25 mi. distant.

Who art thou? Literally, “You, who are you?” They were not concerned with John’s identity as an individual, but with his authority to preach and teach (see v. 25). Later, the authorities put the same question to Jesus (ch. 8:25). Perhaps the delegation half expected John to claim he was the Messiah. Their question apparently reflected this expectation, for John’s answer was a forthright denial of such a claim (ch. 1:20; cf. DA 134).

20. He confessed. John’s categorical denial that he was the Messiah settled that aspect of the question. Characteristically, John the evangelist fortifies this positive declaration with a corresponding negative statement, “denied not” (cf. John 1:3; 3:16; 6:50; 1 John 1:5; 2:4).

I am not the Christ. The personal pronoun “I” is emphatic, as if John said, “*I* am not the Christ.”

21. What then? John’s denial left unanswered the basic question as to his authority for preaching.

Art thou Elias? It was popularly believed that Elijah would appear in person to proclaim the coming of Messiah (Matt. 17:10; DA 422; cf. Mishnah *Shekalim* 2.5,

Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 8; *Eduyoth* 8. 7, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 50; *Baba Mezia* 1. 8; 2. 8; 3. 4, 5, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, pp. 124, 181, 223, 224; etc.).

I am not. John affirmed that he had come to do the *work* the prophets of old had foretold Elijah would do (John 1:23; cf. Mal. 3:1; 4:5; Mark 1:2, 3), but he would have been misunderstood had he claimed to *be* Elijah. It was foretold of John that he was to go before Messiah “in the spirit and power of Elias” (Luke 1:17). For Christ’s declaration that John *was* Elias see on Matt. 11:14; 17:12.

That prophet. Literally, “the prophet,” that is, the prophet foretold by Moses in Deut. 18:15 (see comment there). There was a popular belief that Moses would be raised from the dead, and some apparently wondered whether John might be he (see DA 135). Later, the people thought the same thing of Jesus (John 6:14; 7:40; cf. Acts 3:22; 7:37).

22. *Who art thou?* The question was now general rather than specific (see on vs. 19–21).

An answer. Thus far inquiry had resulted only in negative replies. Now the priests and Levites sought from John a positive declaration.

Them that sent us. That is, the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem (see on v. 19).

23. *I am the voice.* See on Matt. 3:3. John appears to report the exact words of the Baptist, for the quotation as here reported seems to be directly from the Hebrew, by memory. Otherwise, as in the Synoptics, it would probably be from the LXX. Jesus is declared to be “the Word” (John 1:1–3, 14); the Baptist claimed only to be a “voice.” He was only God’s spokesman; Jesus was the Word incarnate.

The way of the Lord. John implies that the leaders of Israel should turn their attention from the one sent to herald Messiah’s coming and begin looking for the Messiah Himself.

24. *Of the Pharisees.* That is, they were of the sect known as Pharisees. Some have suggested that the delegation was composed of Sadducees sent *by* the Pharisees, but there seems to be no valid reason for accepting this interpretation. The force of the Greek implies that the delegation was composed of individuals who were “of,” that is, who “belonged to,” the Pharisees. See on v. 19.

25. *Why baptizest?* Here was the crux of the issue—John’s authority. He did not claim to be Messiah or one of the prophets—what right, then, did he have to pose as a reformer, without their permission? See on v. 19. The question implies acquaintance with the rite of water baptism, and at least a partial understanding of its significance (see on Matt. 3:6). Recent discoveries at *Qumrân* reveal that the rite of water baptism was practiced at the time (see on Matt. 3:6; see pp. 63, 91). Concerning the rite of baptism itself see on Matt. 3:6; Rom. 6:3–6.

26. *I baptize.* See on Matt. 3:11.

There standeth one. Jesus had been baptized (cf. vs. 29–34) at least 40 days before this, and had but recently returned from the wilderness (see on Matt. 3:13 to 4:11; cf. DA 137). John saw Jesus as he spoke and expected Him to respond to the announcement he now made (DA 137).

The Gospel of John says nothing of Jesus’ baptism. One explanation of John’s silence on this and other important incidents is that he pre-supposes acquaintance on the part of his intended readers with accounts already available to them in the Synoptic Gospels. For comment on Christ’s baptism see on Matt. 3:13–17.

Whom ye know not. The word “know” is from the Gr. *oida*. More than three years later the priests and elders declared that they will could not “tell” (Gr. *oida* whether John the Baptist had been divinely appointed (Matt. 21:27). The priests and Levites who had come to interrogate John scanned the audience, but saw no one to whom they thought John’s description might apply (DA 136). But John spoke primarily of recognizing Jesus as the Messiah of prophecy. In the darkness of their souls these spiritual leaders failed to apprehend the true Light (see on John 1:5), they “knew him not” (v. 10) and therefore “received him not” (v. 11; cf. vs. 31–33; chs. 8:19; 14:7, 9; 16:3). Neither they nor those who sent them were able to reach a decision they were prepared to announce publicly and according took a noncommittal attitude (see on Matt. 21:23–27).

27. He it is. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of this clause. It seems to have been inserted later because of a failure to recognize that the following clause, translated “who coming after me,” is in apposition to the last part of v. 26, “there standeth one among you, whom ye know not.” The insertion “he it is” entered English Bibles through the influence of the Latin Vulgate. Accordingly, the first part of v. 27 would read, “even the one coming after me.”

After me. See on Matt. 3:11.

Is preferred before me. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of this clause. It is attested by only a few late manuscripts (cf. DA 136). However, textual evidence attests the expression in vs. 15, 30.

I am not worthy. See on Matt. 3:11.

28. Bethabara. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading “Bethany,” called “Bethany Beyond Jordan” to distinguish it from Bethany near Jerusalem. “Bethabara” was adopted by Origen (c. 250 A.D.), who in his day found no town near the Jordan by the name Bethany, but did find one then known as Bethabara. Neither site has been identified in modern times. There is a ford called *Abārah* about 12 mi. south of the Lake of Galilee, but this is too far north. Bethabara may possibly represent a transposition of letters by which *Beth-‘arabah* became *Beth-‘abarah*. There was a town on the borders of Judah and Benjamin by the name of *Beth-ha‘arabah* (see Joshua 15:6, 61; 18:22), but it is not on the river. Bethabara, literally, “house [or place] of crossing,” would be an appropriate name for a village near any one of numerous fords across the Jordan. The traditional site of Jesus’ baptism is *Maḥādet el-Ḥajlah*, not far from Bethoglah, now ‘Ain Ḥajlah, 4 mi. (6.4 km.) southeast of Jericho. See Early Ministry and Baptism to First Passover; Palestine In Biblical Times.

29. Next day. That is, the day after the events of vs. 19–28. Detailed and often precise chronological information is characteristic of John (see chs. 1:29, 39, 43; 2:1, 12; 4:43; 6:22; 11:6, 17; 12:1, 12; 20:26).

John seeth Jesus. The delegation from Jerusalem had departed. Evidently they did not take John seriously, or they would have pressed their investigation further, to discover, if possible, of whom he spoke (see v. 26). The preceding day Jesus had not been identified by John’s indirect reference to Him as the Messiah (v. 26). Now He is singled out from the crowd.

Behold. What a privilege to be the first to herald (see on Matt. 3:1) Jesus, the One to whom all the prophets of old bore witness, as the true sacrifice! Which of the prophets

would not have thrilled at the privilege! Little wonder that Jesus later spoke of John as a prophet than whom no greater had arisen in Israel (Luke 7:28)!

Lamb of God. That is, the Lamb provided by God. John alone uses this designation for Christ, though Luke (Acts 8:32) and Peter (1 Peter 1:19) have similar comparisons (cf. Isa. 53:7). John the Baptist introduced Jesus as “the Lamb of God” to John the evangelist (see on John 1:35, 36), and for the disciple this title must have held deep significance. The figure, which stresses Jesus’ innocence and perfection of character, and thus the vicarious nature of His sacrifice (Isa. 53:4–6, 11, 12; see on Ex. 12:5), is reminiscent of the paschal lamb of Egypt, which typified deliverance from the bondage of sin. “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5:7). By the figure of a lamb John identifies the suffering Messiah as the one in whom the sacrificial system of OT times reaches reality and has meaning. In the divine foreknowledge and purpose He was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8).

In view of the fact that contemporary Jewish thought found no place for a suffering Messiah, critics doubt that John could have held such a concept (see John 12:34; cf. Mark 9:31, 32; Luke 24:21). But as Robertson has well remarked (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, on John 1:29), “Certainly the Baptist did not have to be as ignorant as the rabbis.” John had the Messianic prophecy of Isa. 53 (see on Isa. 53:1, 4–6; see DA 136). Furthermore, it would be strange indeed for God to ordain John the Baptist as herald of the coming of Messiah and not impart to him the knowledge of this fundamental aspect of Messiah’s mission.

Taketh away. Gr. *airō*, “to lift up,” “to bear away,” “to remove.” Only by virtue of the fact that the Lamb of God was without sin (Heb. 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22) could He “take away [Gr. *airō*] our sins” (1 John 3:5). Because the burden of sin was too heavy for us to bear, Jesus came to lift the load from our shattered lives.

Sin. By the singular form of the word John places emphasis on sin as a principle, rather than on particular sins (see 1 John 2:2; 3:5; 4:10).

30. Of whom. Literally, “on behalf of whom,” not “concerning whom.”

After me ... before me. See on v. 15.

31. I knew him not. As if with the emphasis, “Even I did not know him” to be the Messiah. John’s early witness on behalf of the Messiah was based on direct revelation. There had been no collusion between Jesus and John. Knowing of the circumstances attending the early years of Jesus’ life and of His perfection of character, John believed Jesus to be the Promised One, but until the baptism he had no positive evidence that this was so (see DA 109).

Manifest to Israel. John was the “voice” from God (see on v. 23) directing men to “the Lamb of God” (see on v. 29). The baptism of Jesus marked the climax of John’s mission, though his labors continued for perhaps a year and a half more. He declared, after the baptism, that Jesus “must increase,” and he himself “decrease” (ch. 3:30).

32. John bare record. See on v. 19.

I saw the Spirit. See on Matt. 3:16, 17; Luke 3:21, 22.

33. I knew him not. See on vs. 29, 31.

He that sent me. John points to God as the source of his authority (see on v. 6).

34. I saw. John speaks as an eyewitness (cf. 1 John 1:1).

Son of God. There is some textual evidence (cf. p. 146) for the reading “the Elect of God.” See on Luke 1:35; cf. on John 1:1–3, 14. In the OT (Ps. 2:7) and in the

pseudepigraphal Book of (Enoch 105:2,) about the 1st century B.C., “Son [of God]” appears as a distinctly Messianic title. Only in the Gospel of John is Jesus reported as using the title of Himself (chs. 5:25; 10:36; 11:4). The Jews of Christ’s time clearly understood the title in its highest sense (see ch. 19:7). John’s objective in writing a Gospel was to provide convincing evidence that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (ch. 20:31).

35. *Again the next day.* [*The First Disciples*, John 1:35–51. See Early Ministry and Baptism to First Passover; The Ministry of Our Lord] See on v. 19; cf. vs. 29, 43. John often uses the word “again” more as a connective, by way of relating a new section of his narrative to the preceding section, rather than in a repetitive sense (see chs. 8:12, 21; 10:7, 19; 21:1; etc.).

Two of his disciples. One of these was Andrew (v. 40). John’s reticence throughout his Gospel in referring to himself in connection with incidents in which he was a participant strongly implies that he was the other of the two disciples (cf. chs. 20:2; 21:20–25; see DA 138).

36. *Looking.* Here and in v. 42, fixed, intent, earnest gazing. This is the last occasion on which the gospel record speaks of John’s being with Jesus.

37. *Followed.* Gr. *akoloultheō*, “to follow,” probably not yet in the sense of becoming disciples (John 8:12; 10:4, 27; 12:26; 21:19, 20, 22; see on Matt. 4:19). Here, Andrew and John “followed” Jesus in the sense that they recognized Him to be “the Lamb of God” (John 1:36). Andrew and John were the first followers. Soon Peter, Philip, and Nathanael (Bartholomew) joined them (see John 1:40, 43, 45; see on Mark 3:16–18). The followers did not at this time permanently discontinue their usual occupation and become disciples in the full sense of the word. Not until more than a year later, in the spring of A.D. 29, did they receive the call to permanent discipleship (see on Luke 5:1, 11). Only then could it be said that “they forsook all, and followed him” (Luke 5:11). The formal appointment of the Twelve came even later, during the summer of the same year (see on Mark 3:14).

38. *What seek ye?* These are the first words of Jesus that are reported by John (cf. Luke 2:49).

Rabbi. Gr. *rhabbi*, from the Aramaic *rabi*, meaning “my great one,” generally equivalent to “sir,” but used also in a more restricted sense as a title of distinction and respect for a teacher of the law (see on Matt. 23:7). It has been suggested that, in the latter sense, the word had but recently come into use.

In John, “rabbi” is consistently the term used in addressing Jesus by those who recognize Him as a teacher, perhaps even a prophet, but who either do not as yet realize, or who are unwilling to admit, that He is the Messiah (see chs. 1:38, 49; 3:2; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8). Those for whom Jesus performed miracles often called Him “Lord” (chs. 9:36; 11:3, 21, 27, 32). In the early part of their association with Jesus the disciples are quoted by John as calling Him “Rabbi,” but with a deepening conviction that He is indeed the Sent of God they later call Him “Lord” (chs. 6:68; 11:12; 13:6, 25; 14:5, 8, 22; 21:15, 20; etc.). After the resurrection the title “Lord” is always used of Jesus (1 Cor. 16:22), never “Rabbi.” The synoptic writers do not discriminate between these titles as does John. The Baptist’s disciples called him “rabbi” (John 3:26).

Those who addressed Jesus as “Rabbi” thereby expressed their willingness to learn of Him, whereas those who addressed Him as “Lord” (Aramaic *Mari*, Gr. *Kurios*) thereby expressed either common respect, or the unquestioning submission of servants. However, the terms were often used without any clear sense of distinction between them.

Being interpreted. Writing for Greek readers, John often provides the original Aramaic words of our Lord, but always translates them into Greek (chs. 1:41, 42; 4:25; 5:2; 9:7; 11:16; 19:13, 17; 20:16, 24; 21:2).

Where dwellest thou? Andrew and John desire a more prolonged and personal interview than seems appropriate in a public place.

39. The tenth hour. That is, about 4:00 P.M. In the days of Jesus, Roman usage, then current in Palestine, divided the light part of the day into 12 hours (see ch. 11:9; p. 50; cf. Josephus *Life* 54 [279]). John’s vivid memory of the hour reflects the profound impression events of this day made upon his memory. John repeatedly notes the time of day (see chs. 4:6, 52; 18:28; 19:14; 20:19). This exactness comports with his claim to being an eyewitness (John 19:35; 21:24; 1 John 1:1, 2).

40. One of the two. The writer identifies but one of the two. It is generally believed that the other was the writer himself, John the brother of James, who modestly refrains from identifying himself (see on v. 35; cf. ch. 21:20–24; DA 138).

Followed him. John and Andrew desired to converse with Jesus concerning the declaration of v. 36, “Behold the Lamb of God!” They were not yet thinking of following Him in the formal sense of becoming regular followers (see on v. 43). It was now probably the late autumn or early winter of A.D. 27 (see *The Chronology of Luke* 3:1, 2). They followed Jesus intermittently for the next year and a half before He issued the call to permanent discipleship (see on Luke 5:11). Jesus’ formal appointment of the Twelve did not take place till the late summer of A.D. 29 (see on Mark 3:13–19). The five who “followed” Jesus at the Jordan did so simply in the sense of accepting John’s witness to His Messiahship.

Andrew. See on Mark 3:18.

Simon Peter’s. See on Mark 3:16.

41. His own brother. Andrew became the first disciple to begin bringing others to Jesus. He did so “first,” that is, before he did anything else. This testifies to the profound impression made on his mind and heart by that first conversation with Jesus.

Messias. See on Matt. 1:1.

Interpreted. See on v. 38.

42. Jesus beheld him. In v. 36 (see comment there) “looking” is from the same Greek word here translated “beheld.”

Simon ... Cephas. See on Matt. 16:18; Mark 3:16. The name “Simon” is from the Greek form of the Hebrew “Simeon” (see on Gen. 29:33).

By interpretation. See on v. 38.

43. The day following. That is, the day after the events of vs. 35–42, and probably the third day after those of vs. 19–28 (see vs. 29, 35).

Would go. That is, purposed to go, or was about to go.

Findeth Philip. Perhaps as a result of the efforts of the three who had already found Jesus. Concerning Philip see on Mark 3:18.

Follow me. Here, more nearly in the sense of becoming a disciple (see on Mark 2:14), not in the simple sense of walking after someone, as in v. 37. However, see on Luke 5:11; John 1:40.

44. Bethsaida. See on Matt. 11:21.

45. Philip findeth Nathanael. As the day before, Andrew brought his brother to Jesus, so Philip now brings a friend. The first impulse in the heart of one who is truly converted is to share the joy and the blessing of salvation with others, particularly with those who are near and dear. Nathanael is commonly identified with Bartholomew (see on Mark 3:18).

The law. Here, a technical designation for the first five books of the OT (see on Luke 24:44). Philip refers particularly to the prediction of Deut. 18:15 (see comment there) as meeting its fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth (see on John 6:14).

Son of Joseph. See on Matt. 1:20, 21; Luke 2:33, 41.

46. Any good thing. There is a tinge of scorn in Nathanael's rejoinder to Philip's thrilling announcement. Nathanael was from Cana (ch. 21:2), but a short distance from Nazareth, and doubtless spoke from firsthand knowledge.

Nazareth. See on Matt. 2:23.

Come and see. Compare v. 29. To meet Jesus face to face would be more convincing evidence than a lengthy argument. Thus it is today. The only way to obtain positive evidence of the certainty of faith in Christ is to experience it.

47. An Israelite indeed. Or, "truly an Israelite," that is, one who served God in sincerity of heart (see ch. 4:23, 24) and not as a hypocrite (see on Matt. 6:2; 7:5; 23:13). Nathanael was one of that small but devout group who earnestly waited for "the consolation of Israel" (see on Luke 2:25) and aspired to the high ideals set before them by God (see Vol. IV, pp. 26-30). A true Israelite was not necessarily a literal descendant of Abraham (see John 8:33-44), but one who chose to live in harmony with the will of God (see John 8:39; Acts 10:34, 35; Rom. 2:28, 29; 9:6, 7, 25-27; 10:12, 13; Gal. 3:9, 28, 29; 1 Peter 2:9, 10).

Guile. Gr. *dolos*, literally, "bait," such as for catching fish, but figuratively, "trickery," "guile," "treachery." False pretenses are the "bait" used by the hypocrite to convince men that he is better than he really is.

48. Whence knowest? Nathanael was startled to find that his life lay open like a book before Jesus.

Fig tree. In Palestine the fig and the olive were the favorite trees cultivated for their fruit. To "sit" under one's "fig tree" meant to be at home and at peace (see Micah 4:4; Zech. 3:10; etc.).

49. Rabbi. See on v. 38.

Son of God. See on Luke 1:35. The profound impression made by Christ's declaration (v. 47) is clearly evident from Nathanael's forthright and unqualified profession of faith (v. 49). Evidently it was his earnest desire for clearer light concerning the Baptist's identification of Jesus as "the Lamb of God" (vs. 29, 36) and as "the Son of God" (v. 34), that had led him to seek an appropriate place for meditation and prayer (see DA 140). In response to that prayer he was now provided with convincing evidence that Jesus was divine. Jesus often read men's inmost thoughts and the hidden secrets of their lives, thereby giving them evidence of His divinity (see on Mark 2:8). For later

declarations by the disciples of faith in the divinity of Jesus see Matt. 14:33; 16:16; John 6:69; 16:30; etc.

King of Israel. An additional Messianic title by which Nathanael acknowledged Jesus as the One the prophets promised should “restore again the kingdom to Israel” (Acts 1:6). This title was equivalent to the expression “son of David” (see on Matt. 1:1; Mark 10:48; cf. Zech. 6:13).

50. Greater things. Jesus here refers to the many convincing evidences of divinity Nathanael was to witness during his association with Christ (see DA 142).

51. Verily, verily. See on Matt. 5:18. Of all NT writers only John doubles the word, as here. He does so altogether 25 times, in each instance quoting Jesus.

The Hebrew equivalent of the expression “verily, verily” occurs repeatedly in the Manual of Discipline (1 QS), one of the Dead Sea scrolls (see p. 91), but in a somewhat different sense from that in which John uses it.

Angels of God. In this picturesque figure of speech Jesus envisions His own ministry for mankind (see DA 142, 143). The figure is evidently based on Jacob’s dream at Bethel, while on his way to Haran (Gen. 28:12). Compare Heb. 1:14.

Son of man. See on Mark 2:10. This is Jesus’ first recorded use of the title.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 1

The Christian faith finds its source, its center, and its certainty in the historical Christ of the NT. As set forth in John 1:1–3, 14 (see comment there) and consistently affirmed throughout the NT, Christ is very God in the absolute and unqualified sense of the word, and truly man in every respect, sin excepted. At the incarnation deity and humanity were inseparably united in the person Jesus Christ, the unique God-man (see on Matt. 1:1).

But the Scriptures also declare that “the Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29). The legacy of truth to which the Christian church fell heir thus included the paradox of a triune monotheism and the mystery of an incarnate God, both of which concepts transcend finite understanding and defy ultimate analysis and definition. However, to ardent Christians of apostolic times the dynamic fact of a crucified, risen, and living Lord, whom many of them had seen and heard (see John 1:14; 2 Peter 1:16; John 1:1–3), subordinated the related theological problems to a place of minor importance.

But as, with the passing of that generation (see Rev. 2:4; cf. Joshua 24:31), the vision of a living Lord grew dim and pristine purity and devotion waned, men turned increasingly from the practical realities of the gospel to its intriguing theoretical aspects, under the illusion that by searching with the intricate paraphernalia of philosophy they might, perhaps, find out God (see Job 11:7; Rom. 11:33). Among the diverse heresies that arose to trouble the church none were more serious than those concerned with the nature and person of Christ. Controversy over this problem rocked the church for centuries and was marked by a protracted succession of heresies, councils, and schisms.

For any but students of church history a detailed study of this controversy may appear barren of interest and practical value. But today, no less than in apostolic times, the certainty of the Christian faith centers in the historic Christ of the NT. Also, in one guise or another, various ancient heresies either live on or have been revived. From a brief review of the course of this controversy of earlier times modern Christians may learn to recognize, and to be vigilant against, the same errors that perplexed their devout brethren in ages past (see John 8:32; 1 John 4:1).

The two principal phases of this protracted debate are generally known as the Trinitarian and Christological controversies. The first was concerned with the status of Christ as God, and the second with the incarnate relationship between His divine and human natures. The Trinitarian controversy centered in the battles of the church with Docetism, Monarchianism, and Arianism, from the 1st to the 4th century, and the Christological controversy in its struggles with Nestorianism, Monophysitism, and Monotheletism, from the 5th to the 7th century.

The Apostolic Church. The belief of the apostolic church concerning Jesus is well summed up in Peter's affirmation that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16), and in the simple declaration of faith quoted by Paul, "Jesus is the Lord [Gr. *Kurios*, here equivalent to the Heb. *Yahweh*]" (1 Cor. 12:3). The early Christians believed Him to be God in the highest sense of the word, and made this belief the cornerstone of their faith (see on Matt. 16:18). "Flesh and blood" could not reveal or explain this truth; it must be accepted by faith (see Matt. 16:17). This implicit certainty of the primitive church concerning the Trinity and the divine-human nature of Christ was founded on the explicit teachings of Jesus and the apostles. It was not many years after Christ had ascended to heaven, however, that "grievous wolves" began to make havoc of the flock, and that within the church itself men arose speaking "perverse things" and drawing disciples away after them (see Acts 20:29, 30).

Docetism and Gnosticism. The first error concerning the nature and person of Christ is generally referred to as Docetism. This name comes from a Greek word meaning "to appear." Docetism assumed various forms, but its basic idea was that Christ only *appeared* to have a body, that He was a phantom and not a man at all. The Word became incarnate in *appearance* only. This heresy arose in apostolic times and persisted well on toward the close of the 2d century.

Docetism was particularly characteristic of such groups as the Ebionites and the Gnostics. The former were Jewish Christians who adhered strictly to the rites and practices of Judaism. The latter were primarily Gentile Christians. Gnosticism was little more than a blend of various pagan philosophies masquerading under the guise of Christian terminology.

An early and possibly authentic tradition identifies Simon Magus (see Acts 8:9–24) as the first proponent of error concerning the nature and person of Christ, and as the first Christian Gnostic. A few years later a Christian by the name of Cerinthus arose in Alexandria, a man who is classed by some as an Ebionite and by others as a Gnostic. He denied that Christ had come in the flesh, maintaining that His supposed incarnation was apparent and not real. The Ebionites were not Gnostics but held similar views concerning the humanity of Christ. They regarded Christ as only the literal son of Joseph, but selected by God as the Messiah because He distinguished Himself for piety and observance of the law, and was adopted as the Son of God at His baptism. One group of Ebionites, the Elkesaites, taught that Christ had been literally "begotten" of the Father in ages past, and was thus inferior to Him.

In contrast with the Ebionites, who looked upon Christ as essentially a superior type of human being, the Gnostics, generally speaking, denied that He was a human being at all. They conceived of Christ as a phantom, or "aeon," that temporarily took possession of Jesus, an ordinary human being. Divinity was not truly incarnate. Concerning the tremendous impact of Gnosticism upon Christianity the church historian Latourette

suggests the possibility that “for a time the majority of those who regarded themselves as Christians adhered to one or another of its many forms” (K. S. Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, p. 123). Arising gradually in apostolic times, Gnosticism reached the apex of its influence upon the church during the 2d century. Recognizing the grave threat posed by Gnosticism, the church fought back heroically.

Writing during the latter half of the 2d century, Irenaeus remarks that John wrote his Gospel with the specific purpose of refuting the Docetic views of Cerinthus (Irenaeus *Against Heresies* xi. 1, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1, p. 426; see John 1:1–3, 14; 20:30, 31). In the epistles John even more clearly warns against the Docetic heresy, whose advocates he brands as “anti-christ” (1 John 2:18–26; John 4:1–3, 9, 14; 2 John 7, 10). During his first imprisonment in Rome (c. A.D. 62), Paul cautioned the believers in Colossae against Docetic error (Col. 2:4, 8, 9, 18), and about the same time Peter voiced an even stronger warning (2 Peter 2:1–3). Jude (v. 4) refers to the Docetic heresy. The “Nicolaitanes” of Rev. 2:6 were Gnostics, though not necessarily Docetists (Irenaeus *Against Heresies* xi. 1, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 426).

During the first half of the 2d century various Gnostic teachers arose to plague the church with their noxious heresies. Prominent among these were Basilides and Valentinus, both of Alexandria. But perhaps the most influential—and successful—proponent of Docetic ideas was Marcion, during the latter half of the same century. He was by no means a Gnostic, but his views about Christ closely resembled those of the Gnostics. He held that the birth, physical life, and death of Jesus were not real, but merely gave the appearance of reality.

Against the gross errors of Docetism the church struggled courageously. During the latter half of the 2d century Irenaeus came boldly forward as the great champion of orthodoxy against heresy. His polemical work *Against Heresies*, specifically the Gnostic heresy, has survived to the present day. Irenaeus emphasized the unity of God.

Monarchianism. As the name indicates, Monarchianism stressed the unity of the Godhead. (A “monarch” is literally a “sole ruler.”) It was, in effect, a reaction against the many gods of the Gnostics and the two gods of Marcion—the God of the OT, whom he considered an evil God, and Christ, a God of love. As reactionary movements so often do, it went to the opposite extreme, and as a result became a heresy the church later found it necessary to condemn. The trend of which Monarchianism was characteristic may largely be credited with purging the church of Gnostic teachings, but the cure caused almost as much havoc as the malady it was supposed to remedy. The struggle with Monarchianism began toward the close of the 2d century and continued well into the 3d. There were two types of Monarchians, the Dynamists (from a Greek word meaning “power”), who taught that a divine power animated the human body of Jesus, who supposedly had no proper deity of His own and lacked a true human soul, and the Modalists, who conceived of one God who had revealed Himself in different ways.

In order to maintain the unity of the Godhead the Dynamists utterly denied the deity of Christ, whom they considered a mere man chosen of God to be the Messiah and raised to a level of deity. According to Adoptionism, one variation of this theory, the man Jesus attained to perfection and was adopted as the Son of God, at His baptism.

The Modalists taught that *one* God had revealed Himself in *different* ways. Denying any distinction in personality, they abandoned belief in the triune nature of the Godhead altogether. They accepted the true divinity of both Father and Son, but hastened to

explain that the two were only different designations for the same divine being. This view is sometimes called Patripassianism, because, presumably, the Father became the Son at the incarnation, and subsequently suffered and died as the Christ. Similarly, at the resurrection, the Son became the Holy Spirit. From the most famous exponent of the theory, Sabellius, this view is also called Sabellianism. The Sabellians held that the names of the Trinity were merely designations by which the same divine person performed various cosmic functions. Thus prior to the incarnation this divine being was the Father; at the incarnation the Father became the Son; and at the resurrection the Son became the Holy Spirit.

Early in the 3d century Tertullian refuted Modalistic Monarchianism, stressing both the personality of the Son of God and the unity of the Godhead. However, he proposed that Christ was a subordinate order of God—a theory known as Subordinationism.

About the middle of the 3d century Origen advanced the theory of eternal generation, according to which the Father alone is God in the highest sense. The Son is coeternal with the Father, but “God” only in a derived sense. Origen believed that Christ’s soul—like all human souls, as he mistakenly supposed—pre-existed, but differed from all others in being pure and unfallen. The Logos, or divine Word, grew into indissoluble union with the human soul of Jesus. Distinguishing between *theos*, God, and *ho theos*, the God, in John 1:1, Origen concluded that the Son is not God in the primary and absolute sense, but “God” only by virtue of the communication of a secondary grade of divinity which might be termed *theos*, but not *ho theos*. Christ would thus be midway between things created and uncreated. Origen may be called the father of Arianism.

Arianism. Early in the 4th century Arius, a presbyter of the church in Alexandria, adopted Origen’s theory of the Logos, except that he denied any substance intermediate between God and created beings. From this he deduced that the Son is not divine in any sense of the word, but strictly a creature, though the very highest and first of all, and that therefore “there was [a time] when He was not.” He taught that there is only one being—the Father—to whom timeless existence can be attributed, that the Father created the Son out of nothing, and that prior to His generation by an act of the Father’s will the Son did not exist. To Arius, Christ was neither truly human, for He was without a human soul, nor yet truly divine, for He was without the essence and attributes of God. He was simply the most exalted of all created beings. The human being Jesus was chosen, by virtue of God’s foreknowledge of His triumph, to be the Christ.

At the First Council of Nicaea, convened in A.D. 325 to settle the Arian controversy, Athanasius stepped forward as “the father of orthodoxy,” maintaining that Jesus Christ always was, and that He came, not from the previously nonexistent, but from the very same essence as the Father. Applying the term *homoousios*, “one substance,” to Christ, the council affirmed its belief that He is of one and the same essence as the Father.

Homoousios could not be understood otherwise. The council anathematized both Arianism and Sabellianism as the two principal deviations from exact truth, and declared that it was not denying the unity of the Godhead when it asserted the trinity, nor denying the trinity when it asserted the unity. Thus the Nicene Creed states that the Son is “begotten of the Father [... the essence of the Father, God of God], Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance (ὁμοούσιον) with the

Father” (cited in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 1, p. 29). This creed became the crucial test of Trinitarian orthodoxy.

The Arians rejected the decision of the council and went into schism, and for centuries Arianism proved to be the most formidable foe of the Roman Catholic Church (see on Dan. 7:8). Following the First Council of Nicaea a group sometimes called semi-Arians also troubled the church. Their key word was *homoiousios*, by which they described the Son as being of “like substance” with the Father, in contrast with the *homoousios* (“same substance”) of the Nicene Creed. Prominent among opponents of orthodoxy following the Council of Nicaea were Apollinaris and Marcellus. Both affirmed the true unity of the divine and the human in Christ but denied His true humanity, asserting that the divine will made of the human nature of Jesus a passive instrument. These various problems led to another council in the year 381, at Constantinople. This council reaffirmed the Nicene Creed, clarified its meaning, and declared the presence of two real natures in Christ.

Nestorianism. After the Council of Constantinople the attention of the church turned to the so-called Christological aspect of the problem of the nature and person of Christ. Attempts were made to define the nature of the divine and of the human elements in Christ, and to state the relationship between these two. How could two personal natures exist together in one person?

This phase of the controversy centered in two opposing schools of thought, one in Alexandria and the other in Antioch, in Syria. Both acknowledged the true unity of divinity and humanity in the one person, Jesus Christ, but the Alexandrian school emphasized the *unity* of the two natures and stressed the importance of deity, whereas the Antiochian school emphasized the *distinction* between the two natures and stressed the importance of the human aspect. Partisans of Antioch held that divinity and humanity had entered into a relation of constant coexistence and cooperation without actually merging. They separated the two natures in the one person, declaring that there was not a complete union but only permanent association. They made a sharp distinction between Christ as the Son of God and Christ as the Son of man, and gave the human nature more distinct recognition. They conceived of the unity of the two natures as accomplished through the unity of the respective wills. They preserved the reality and completeness of Christ’s human nature, but endangered the unity of the person. It was an imperfect, incomplete, loose, mechanical union, in which the two natures were not truly united in a single self-conscious person. The Alexandrians, on the other hand, conceived of a miraculous and complete commingling of the two natures, the human being fused into one with the divine and made subordinate to it. God thus entered humanity, and by means of this union of Godhood and manhood it became possible for Christ to lead mankind back to God.

The collision between these two schools of thought reached its climax in the Nestorian controversy early in the 5th century. Nestorius, of Antioch, conceded true deity and true humanity, but denied their union in a single self-conscious person. The Nestorian Christ is really two persons enjoying a moral and sympathetic union, neither however being decisively affected by the other. Deity is not humbled; humanity is not exalted. There is God and there is man; but there is no God-man.

The third ecumenical church council was called at Ephesus, in 431, for the purpose of settling this contest between the schools of Antioch and Alexandria. The council

condemned Nestorius and his teachings, but did not consider it necessary to draw up a new creed to replace the Nicene Creed. Nothing was really settled or accomplished, except to widen the rift, and the ensuing controversy took on such proportions that all other doctrinal problems were laid aside.

Monophysitism. Following the Council at Ephesus still another theory, known as Monophysitism, or Eutychianism, arose and took the stage to set forth a conception of Christ precisely opposite to that of Nestorius. Eutyches, its leading exponent, contended that the original human nature of Jesus was transmuted into the divine nature at the incarnation, with the result that the human Jesus and divine Christ became one person and one nature. He asserted the unity of self-consciousness but so merged the two natures that, for practical purposes, they lost their individual identity.

Convened in 451 to discuss Nestorianism and Monophysitism, the Council of Chalcedon decided against both. Both Nestorius and Eutyches rejected the decision of the council and founded independent sects of Christianity, as Arius had done more than a century earlier.

The Council of Chalcedon affirmed the perfect divinity and the perfect humanity of Christ, declaring Him to be of one substance with the Father as to His divine nature and of one substance with us as to His human nature, except for sin. The identity of each nature was preserved and the two were declared to be distinct, unmingled, immutable, indivisible, inseparable. Divinity, not humanity, was recognized as the basis of Christ's personality. Because the one person is a union of two natures, the suffering of the God-man was truly infinite; He suffered in His human nature and not in His divine nature, but the passion was infinite because the person is infinite. What later came to be known as the Chalcedon Symbol reads in part:

"We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [of one substance] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, *inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably*; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence" (Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 2, p. 62).

The result of the Council of Chalcedon was to perpetuate and intensify schism in the East. Finally the emperor Justinian, convinced that the security of the empire required a settlement of the problem, permanently closed the schools at Antioch and Alexandria, the two centers of controversy. At a second Council of Constantinople, in 553, the church decided upon the forcible suppression of Monophysitism, which went into permanent schism and persists to this day in Christian sects such as the Jacobites, the Copts, and the Abyssinians. Reaffirming the Symbol of Chalcedon, the church achieved a definitive distinction between orthodoxy and heterodoxy.

Monotheletism. It is true that one question remained unsettled: Are the two natures, the divine and the human, actuated by one will controlling both natures, or by two wills?

The Monothelites considered the divine will dominant, and the human will submerged in it. At the third Council of Constantinople, in 680, the church decided that the will is a matter of the natures rather than of the one person, and pronounced in favor of two wills in one volitional person. This completed the orthodox definition of the nature and person of Christ for the Western Church, and brought the protracted Trinitarian and Christological controversies formally to a close. About the year 730 John of Damascus recapitulated these doctrines for the Eastern Church. For both East and West the decisions of the councils became a matter of dogma.

In Reformation Times. The Reformation found both Roman and Protestant branches of Christianity in fundamental agreement on the Trinity and the nature of Christ. The Nicene Creed and the Symbol of Chalcedon proved generally acceptable to both. Luther taught a mutual interchange of characteristics between the two natures, so that what was characteristic of each became common to both. Everything human in Christ was appropriated by the divine nature, and humanity received what belonged to the divine nature. The Reformed churches emphasized the fellowship of the divine and the human in Christ.

Two minor Reformation groups differed from the Nicene position. The first of these was the Socinians, who revived the basic Monarchian idea that a divine Trinity is inconceivable. Modern Unitarianism perpetuates this concept. The second group was the Arminians, who took a view similar, in some respects, to that of certain earlier groups, that the Son is subordinate to the Father. This view is similarly reflected by various Christian sects today.

Seventh-day Adventists. The writers and editors of this commentary frankly confess that there are great mysteries in the Scriptures which transcend the limits of finite understanding and thus defy precise statement in human language. The union of the divine and the human in Christ is one such mystery. In dealing with theological questions of this kind Seventh-day Adventists have ever sought to eschew speculation and finespun philosophizing, lest they darken counsel with words (see 8T 279). If the inspired writers of the Bible have not made clear every detail of the divine mysteries, why should uninspired writers attempt to do so? However, Inspiration has provided sufficient information to enable us to understand in part the mystery of the plan of salvation. Seventh-day Adventists believe in:

1. *The Godhead.* The Godhead, or Trinity, consists of three persons—the eternal Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the eternal Father, and the Holy Spirit (see Matt. 28:19; John 1:1, 2; 6:27; 14:16, 17, 26; Acts 5:3, 4; Eph. 4:4–6; Heb. 1:1–3, 8; see on John 1:1–3, 14).

“There are three living persons of the heavenly trio ... the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” (Ev 615). Christ and the Father are “one in nature, in character, in purpose” (PP 34), but “not in person” (8T 269; cf. 9T 68). The Holy Spirit “is as much a person as God is a person” (Ev 616).

See EGW Supplementary Material on Rom. 1:20–25.

2. *The Deity and Pre-existence of Christ.* Christ is God in the supreme and unqualified sense of the term—in nature, in wisdom, in authority, and in power (see Isa. 9:6; Micah 5:2; John 1:1–3; 8:58; 14:8–11; Col. 1:15–17; 2:9; Heb. 1:8; see on Micah 5:2; Matt. 1:1, 23; Luke 1:35; John 1:1–3; 16:28; Phil. 2:6–8; Col. 2:9).

“Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God. ... There never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. ... He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent” (Ev 615; cf. DA 469, 470; Ev 614; PP 38, 63).

“Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore. The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father” (EGW RH April 5, 1906; cf. DA 19).

See EGW Supplementary Material on John 1:1–3, 14; COL 2:9; 3:10.

3. *The Humanity of Christ.* The Lord Jesus Christ was a true and complete human being, like other men in all respects except that He “knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21; see Luke 24:39; John 1:14; Rom. 1:3, 4; 5:15; Gal. 4:4; Phil. 2:7; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 2:14, 17; 1 John 1:1; 4:2; 2 John 7; see on Matt. 1:23; John 1:14; Phil. 2:6–8).

“Christ was a real man” (EGW YI Oct. 13, 1898), “fully human” (EGW ST June 17, 1897), “a partaker of our nature” (EGW RH Feb. 18, 1890). “He came as a helpless babe, bearing the humanity we bear” (EGW MS 21, 1895), and “as a member of the human family He was mortal” (EGW RH Sept. 4, 1900). “He prayed for His disciples and for Himself, thus identifying Himself with our needs, our weaknesses, and our failings” (2T 508; cf. MH 422).

See EGW Supplementary Material on John 1:1–3, 14; Col. 1:26, 27; Heb. 2:14–18.

4. *The Incarnation of Christ.* The incarnation was a true, complete, and indissoluble union of the divine and human natures in the one person, Jesus Christ, each nature, however, being preserved intact and distinct from the other (see Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:35; John 1:14; Phil. 2:5–8; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 John 4:2, 3; see on Matt. 1:18; John 1:14; 16:28; Phil. 2:6–8).

“Christ was a real man. ... Yet He was God in the flesh” (EGW YI Oct. 13, 1898). “His divinity was veiled with humanity,—the invisible glory in the visible human form” (DA 23). “He has a two-fold nature, at once human and divine. He is both God and man” (EGW MS 76, 1903).

“Was the human nature of the Son of Mary changed into the divine nature of the Son of God? No; the two natures were mysteriously blended in one person—the Man Christ Jesus” (EGW letter 280, 1904). “The human did not take the place of the divine, nor the divine of the human” (EGW ST May 10, 1899). “Divinity was not degraded to humanity; divinity held its place” (EGW RH Feb. 18, 1890).

“He exhibited a perfect humanity, combined with deity; ... preserving each nature distinct” (EGW GCB 4th quarter, 1899, p. 102).

“The humanity of Christ could not be separated from His divinity” (EGW MS 106, 1897).

See EGW Supplementary Material on John 1:1–3, 14; Eph. 3:8; Phil. 2:6–8; Col. 2:9.

5. *The Subordination of Christ.* Voluntarily assuming the limitations of human nature at the incarnation, the Lord Jesus Christ thereby subordinated Himself to the Father for the duration of His earthly ministry (see Ps. 40:8; Matt. 26:39; John 3:16; 4:34; 5:19, 30; 12:49; 14:10; 17:4, 8; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:7, 8; Heb. 2:9; see on Luke 1:35; 2:49; John 3:16; 4:34; Phil. 2:7, 8).

“Laying aside His royal robe and kingly crown” (9T 68), the Son of God “chose to give back the scepter into the Father’s hands, and to step down from the throne of the universe” (DA 22, 23). “He voluntarily assumed human nature. It was His own act, and

by His own consent” (EGW RH Sept. 4, 1900). “Jesus condescended to humble Himself, to take human nature” (EGW ST Jan. 20, 1890; cf. 5T 702). “He humbled Himself, and took mortality upon Him” (EGW RH Sept. 4, 1900).

“The Son of God was surrendered to the Father’s will, and dependent upon His power. So utterly was Christ emptied of self that He made no plans for Himself. He accepted God’s plans for Him, and day by day the Father unfolded His plans” (DA 208; cf. 664). “While bearing human nature, He was dependent upon the Omnipotent for His life. In His humanity, He laid hold of the divinity of God” (EGW ST June 17, 1897).

See EGW Supplementary Material on Luke 1:35.

6. *The Sinless Perfection of Christ.* Though susceptible to temptation and “in all points tempted like as we are,” Jesus was nevertheless altogether “without sin” (see Matt. 4:1–11; Rom. 8:3, 4; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 2:10; 4:15; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; 1 John 3:5; see on Matt. 4:1–11; 26:38, 41; Luke 2:40, 52; Heb. 2:17; 4:15).

Our Saviour “assumed the liabilities of human nature, to be proved and tried” (EGW ST Aug. 2, 1905; cf. DA 49, 117, 131). “Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity” (DA 49).

“He could have sinned; . . . but not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity” (EGW letter 8, 1895, see p. 1128). He took “the nature but not the sinfulness of man” (EGW ST May 29, 1901). “He vanquished Satan in the same nature over which in Eden Satan obtained the victory” (EGW YI April 25, 1901).

“Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess” (DA 664; cf. 24). “In His human nature He maintained the purity of His divine character” (ML 323). “No trace of sin marred the image of God within Him” (DA 71; cf. 123).

See EGW Supplementary Material on Matt. 4:1–11; Luke 2:40, 52; Col. 2:9, 10; Heb. 2:14–18; 4:15.

7. *The Vicarious Death of Christ.* The sacrifice of Christ provided full and complete atonement for the sins of the world (see Isa. 53:4–6; John 3:14–17; 1 Cor. 15:3; Heb. 9:14; 1 Peter 3:18; 4:1; 1 John 2:2; see on Isa. 53:4; Matt. 16:13).

“He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His” (DA 25).

“In the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ suffered in man’s stead, and the human nature of the Son of God staggered under the terrible horror of the guilt of sin” (EGW MS 35, 1895). “Human nature would then and there have died under the horror of the sense of sin, had not an angel from heaven strengthened Him to bear the agony” (EGW MS 35, 1895).

“Christ’s sacrifice in behalf of man was full and complete. The condition of the atonement had been fulfilled. The work for which He had come to this world had been accomplished” (AA 29; cf. 5T 575).

See EGW Supplementary Material on Matt. 26:36–46; 27:50; Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 2:5.

8. *The Resurrection of Christ.* In His divinity Christ had power not only to lay down His life but to take it up again, when summoned forth from the grave by His Father (see John 10:18; Acts 13:32, 33; Rom. 1:3, 4; 1 Cor. 15:3–22; Heb. 13:20; 1 Peter 1:3; see Additional Note on Matt. 28).

“When the voice of the mighty angel was heard at Christ’s tomb, saying, Thy Father calls Thee, the Saviour came forth from the grave by the life that was in Himself. ... In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death” (DA 785; cf. 780).

See EGW Supplementary Material on Mark 16:6.

9. *The Ascension of Christ.* Our Saviour ascended to heaven in His glorified body, there to minister on our behalf (see Mark 16:19; Luke 24:39; John 14:1–3; 16:28; 20:17; Acts 1:9–11; Rom. 8:34; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 7:25; 8:1, 2; 9:24; 1 John 2:1, 2; see on Acts 1:9–11).

“God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. ... God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven” (DA 25).

“All need to become more intelligent in regard to the work of the atonement, which is going on in the sanctuary above” (5T 575).

See EGW Supplementary Material on Acts 1:9–11; Heb. 2:14–18.

10. *The Exaltation of Christ.* Upon His return to heaven Christ resumed the position that He had with the Father prior to the incarnation (see Matt. 28:18; John 12:23; 17:5; Eph. 1:19–22; Phil. 2:8, 9; Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 1:3; 2:9; 1 Peter 1:11; see on Phil. 2:9).

“When Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned amidst the adoration of angels. ... Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. ... He had, as priest and king, received all authority in heaven and on earth” (AA 38, 39; cf. 8T 268, 269).

These and many other great mysteries connected with the plan of salvation will be the study of the redeemed throughout eternity.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 Ev 615

1, 2 PP 34

1–3DA 281; FE 406

1–5TM 63, 138

3 CT 530; DA 288; Ed 134; SC 88

3, 4 MM 7

4 DA 270, 465; Ed 28; MB 39; MH 461; SC 19; 8T 288, 324

4, 5 DA 464; TM 365

5 COL 116; DA 80, 470; FE 167; 1T 406

6 3T 61

9 COL 385; CT 28, 361, 530; DA 317, 464; Ed 14, 29, 134; FE 181, 183, 405, 437, 440, 468, 470 GC 262, 461, 528; GW 50; PK 253, 377; SC 24; TM 419; 8T 256

9–12TM 365

10 5T 737

10–14TM 138

11 COL 116; CW 45; DA 27; PK 710; 9T 229

12 AA 381; AH 36; COL 314; CT 14; DA 464; Ev 308; FE 405; GW 50; ML 176; MH 421; MM 113; TM 94, 221, 283, 485; 6T 60, 363, 372; 7T 39; 8T 102, 177, 207, 267; 9T 23, 141, 152, 218, 287

12, 13 DA 509; Ev 531

- 14 AA 472, 520, 544; CS 136; CT 259; DA 23, 139, 387, 507; Ed 28; FE 378, 382, 400, 444; GC vi; MM 321; PP 278; TM 63; 5T 576, 747; 6T 59; 7T 20; 8T 207, 286; 9T 228; WM 53
- 16 AA 521, 544; DA 250; FE 338, 362; MB 21; TM 94, 205; 7T 20; 8T 151
- 18 DA 464; GW 50; MH 419; PK 693, 696; SC 11; 8T 265, 286
- 19–23DA 134
- 19–51DA 132–143
- 23 PK 689; 8T 333
- 25 DA 135
- 25–27DA 136
- 27 DA 216
- 29 CH 422, 528; COL 77, 222, 250, 274; CS 289; CSW 12, 109; CT 648; DA 112, 136, 137, 175, 180, 216, 385, 439, 477, 579, 594, 622, 651, 750; Ev 134, 188, 291, 299, 444, 578, 582; EW 154; FE 97, 239, 383; GC 399; GW 26, 56, 148, 155, 172; LS 345; MB 2, 8; ML 171, 220; MH 157; MM 31; SC 19, 79; TM 155, 214, 218; 2T 30; 4T 395; 5T 449, 729; 6T 20, 32, 39, 54, 67, 81, 95, 105, 279, 314; 7T 238; 8T 334; 9T 23, 48, 60, 81, 203
- 36–38DA 138
- 38, 39 MB 131
- 39, 41–43 DA 139
- 43 DA 292
- 45 DA 145, 292; FE 365; 6T 428
- 45, 46 Ev 446; FE 142; 3T 566; 6T 37
- 45–49DA 140
- 45–51CSW 25, 26
- 46 DA 71; MYP 78; Te 224
- 47 4T 534
- 47, 48 SC 91; TM 110
- 50 DA 142, 148
- 51 DA 142; GC 19; PP 184; SC 20

CHAPTER 2

- 1 *Christ turneth water into wine, 12 departeth into Capernaum, and to Jerusalem, 14 where he purgeth the temple of buyers and sellers. 19 He foretelleth his death and resurrection. 23 Many believed because of his miracles, but he would not trust himself with them.*

1. The third day. [*The Wedding Feast at Cana, John 2:1–12.* See Early Ministry and Baptism to First Passover; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] A common Hebrew and Greek idiom meaning “the second day,” or, as we would say, “the day after the morrow” (cf. Luke 13:32; see Vol. I, pp. 181, 182; Vol. V, pp. 248–250), in this case the second day after the incident of John 1:43–51. Jesus left the vicinity of Bethabara (see on ch. 1:28), traveled the rest of the day mentioned in ch. 1:43, all of the next day, and most of the third. Ch. 2 continues the narrative of ch. 1 without interruption. If Christ’s baptism took place about the time of the Feast of Tabernacles (see on Matt. 3:13), it would now be about the month of December. Some two months had passed since Jesus left Nazareth (see DA 145).

A marriage. Gr. *gamos*, “a wedding,” “wedding festivities.” These were usually held in the home of the groom and continued for several days (see DA 145, 146; Matt. 25:1–13).

Cana. Traditionally identified, since Byzantine times, with *Kefr Kennā*, 3.5 mi. (5.6 km.) northeast of Nazareth, but now thought to be the modern *Khirbet Qânā*, about 8 mi. (13 km.) north of Nazareth (see Early Galilean Ministry). Cana means “the place of reeds.” Reeds abound in marshes near *Khirbet Qânā*, and potsherds dating from Roman times have been found there. Also, the name *Qânā* corresponds more closely with the ancient name for Cana.

Nathanael was of Cana (ch. 21:2). Here the nobleman found Jesus about one year later (ch. 4:43–54).

The mother of Jesus. John never refers to Mary by name (see chs. 2:12; 6:42; 19:25). Joseph was doubtless dead by this time (see on Luke 2:51). Concerning Mary as the mother of Jesus see on Matt. 1:23 Luke 1:27, 28.

2. Jesus was called. That is, invited. He had known of the wedding and apparently returned to Galilee at this time in order to be present (DA 144).

His disciples. There were five of them—John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael (see ch. 1:40–45). Possibly they were friends or relatives of the two families. Otherwise they received their invitation when they appeared in Cana as companions of Jesus. Their presence testified to the fact that Jesus had entered upon His work as a teacher. See on ch. 1:37, 40.

3. Wanted wine. Literally, “the wine failed.” Having assisted in arrangements for the wedding (see DA 146), Mary felt responsible to supply the lack, and sought to avoid the embarrassment that would otherwise follow.

Mary’s confidence in coming to Jesus with the problem is worthy of note. As a dutiful son Jesus had always been attentive to her desires, and had found an appropriate solution to every problem. Whether Mary expected Jesus to perform a miracle, which He had not done before (see v. 11), is not clear from the Gospel narrative (cf. DA 145, 146). Possibly the presence of Jesus and His disciples had attracted a crowd.

4. Woman. In the Orient a customary, dignified, and respectful form of address (ch. 19:26; cf. DA 146). He who had commanded men to honor their parents (Ex. 20:12; cf. PP 366) was Himself a living example of the principle. For 30 years He had been a loving, obedient, attentive son (see on Luke 2:51, 52; cf. DA 147).

What have I to do with thee? Literally, “What to you and to me?” The expression implies that the one thus addressed has exceeded the bounds of what properly concerns him (see Judges 11:12; 2 Sam. 16:10; 1 Kings 17:18; 2 Kings 3:13; 2 Chron. 35:21; Matt. 8:29; Mark 1:24; Luke 8:28; etc.). That Mary did not understand Jesus’ reply as a refusal is evident from her instructions to the servants (see John 2:5). She was satisfied that Jesus would supply the need in His own good time and way. Throughout His private life in Nazareth, Jesus had honored the authority of His mother; in fact He ever remained a dutiful son in the sphere where that relationship properly prevailed (see ch. 19:26, 27). But now He was no longer a private individual, and Mary did not appreciate fully the limits this placed on her authority over Jesus. She might feel she had the right, in some degree at least, to direct Him in His mission (see on Matt. 12:46–50). Accordingly, in these clear-cut but courteous words Jesus sought to make clear to her the distinction between His relation to her as the Son of man and as the Son of God (DA 147). His love for her was unchanged, but now He must labor from day to day under the direction of His heavenly Father (see DA 208; see on Luke 2:49).

As with Mary and Jesus, parents today often find it difficult to relax, and eventually relinquish, authority over their children, in order that the latter may gain experience in meeting the problems of life for themselves and learn to accept responsibility for their decisions. Wise are the parents and fortunate the children when this transition of authority takes place naturally and without friction.

Mine hour. Compare chs. 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20; etc. Mary apparently hoped that Jesus would, upon this occasion, proclaim Himself the Messiah (see DA 145), but the time for such an announcement had not arrived (see on Mark 1:25). There was an appointed time for each event in His life (DA 451; see on Luke 2:49). Not until the very close of His ministry did Jesus publicly claim to be the Messiah (see on Matt. 21:1, 2), and because of this claim He was crucified (Matt. 26:63–65; Luke 23:2; John 19:7; see on Matt. 27:63–66). Not until the night of the betrayal did Jesus say, “My time is at hand” (Matt. 26:18; cf. John 12:23; 13:1; 17:1).

5. Servants. Gr. *diakonoî*, whence our word “deacon.” The servants apparently looked to Mary as the one responsible for providing more wine, for even “the ruler of the feast” did not yet know of the lack (see DA 148).

6. Waterpots of stone. Presumably stone was preferable to ordinary earthenware as a container for water used for purposes of purification (cf. Mishnah *Kelim* 10. 1, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 52; Talmud *Shabbath* 96a, Soncino ed., p. 459). The water stored in these containers was no doubt intended for the ceremonial use of the guests attending the wedding.

The purifying. That is, the ceremonial washing of hands before and after meals (see on Mark 7:2–5), and perhaps also of the various utensils needed in the preparation and eating of the food at the wedding feast.

The Jews. John was evidently writing for non-Jews. The explanation here given would not have been needed by Jewish readers.

Two or three firkins. The “firkin” (see p. 50) may have been about 5.8 U.S. gal. (22 l.), or, as others think, roughly 10 gal. (c. 39 l.). If we take the smaller estimate of two firkins apiece, each waterpot would have held either 11.6 gal. (44 l.) or around 20 gal. (78 l.); all six would have contained 69.7 gal. (264 l.), or, at the most, 120 gal. (468 l.). A vast number of guests must have been present at this wedding feast.

7. Fill the waterpots. All that human power could accomplish was to be done by human hands (see p. 209). Divine power was about to be revealed, but conscientious human effort was to be united with it. God never does for men what they can do for themselves, as this would make spiritual weaklings out of them. Like Moses (see Ex. 4:2), the widow (2 Kings 4:2), and Jesus own disciples (Matt. 15:34), we are to utilize fully the resources we have at hand if we expect God to add His blessing.

To the brim. The servants could later testify that nothing but pure water had been placed in the jars.

8. Governor of the feast. Gr. *architriklinos*, literally, “ruler of the three reclining couches.” On formal social occasions the guests at a feast reclined on sloping couches placed on three sides of a low table, the fourth being left open for table service. This arrangement of table and couches was called a *triklinion* (see on Mark 2:15).

9. Ruler of the feast. Gr. *architriklinos*, translated “governor of the feast” in v. 8.

Wine. This was “the pure juice of the grape” (DA 149). Jesus would act consistently with principles revealed to earlier Bible writers (see Prov. 20:1; 23:29–32; cf. 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19). See on Matt. 26:27.

Drew the water. It seems that the water remained water as long as it was in the jars, for it is said to have been “water” when the servants drew it. Perhaps it was during the process of taking water from the jars that it became wine. Compare on Mark 6:41.

Called the bridegroom. In Oriental lands the groom, or his family, or his family, was expected to provide all the supplies necessary for a wedding feast.

10. Every man. The “ruler of the feast” was embarrassed at what appeared to be a departure from standard practice and feared that the guests would blame him for such a breach of custom. By calling the groom, he sought to make clear that the responsibility was not his.

Well drunk. When men were “well drunk” their senses would be dulled, and they would not be able to distinguish good from bad.

Good wine. This wine was superior to any the steward of the feast had ever tasted (DA 148). The guests also noted the quality of the wine—incidental evidence that they were not “well drunk” at the time—and made inquiry as to its origin (DA 149). Heaven always provides its best things last, for those who patiently wait.

11. This beginning. The first miracle was performed about one week after the call of the first disciples (see v. 1). The second recorded miracle was also performed at Cana, on the occasion of Jesus’ next visit about one year later (see ch. 4:43–54).

Miracles. Gr. *sēmeia*, “signs” (see p. 208).

His glory. That is, the evidence of His divine character and power (see p. 209; see on ch. 1:14).

His disciples believed. This miracle provided the early disciples with the first visible evidence of divine power working through Christ, fortified them against the unbelief and antipathy of the Jewish leaders, and provided them with their first opportunity to testify to their new-found faith. Also, it honored Mary’s trust. In a practical way it expressed the sympathetic interest of Jesus in human happiness.

12. After this. Gr. *meta touto*, a transitional phrase, used by John (see chs. 11:7, 11; 19:28) to indicate strict chronological sequence without specifying the length of the time interval.

Down to Capernaum. From Cana, deep in the Galilean hills, it would literally be “down” to Capernaum on the shores of the Lake of Galilee, 685 ft. (209 m.) below the level of the Mediterranean (see on Matt. 4:13). The purpose of this visit is not stated.

His brethren. See on Matt. 12:46.

Not many days. Probably during the late winter of A.D. 27–28.

13. The Jews’ passover. [*First Passover: First Cleansing of the Temple, John 2:13–25. Cf. on Matt. 21:12–17. See Judean Ministry from First Passover A.D. 28; The Duration of Christ’s Ministry, the Opening of the Galilean Ministry, The Ministry of Our Lord.*] This, the Passover of A.D. 28, was the first of Jesus’ ministry (see pp. 193, 247). Had John been writing for Jewish readers, he would simply have said “the passover.” Concerning the Passover feast see on Ex. 12:3–15; Lev. 23:5; Deut. 16:1, 2.

Up to Jerusalem. See on Luke 10:30; 19:28.

14. The temple. Gr. *hieron*, the Temple with its courts, porches, and outlying buildings, not the *naos*, the main building itself, as in v. 20 (see on Matt. 4:5). In John 2:21 Jesus uses *naos* of His body. The outer court, or Court of the Gentiles, was the scene of the unholy traffic here described.

Those that sold. This was Jesus' First Cleansing of the Temple, His first act of national importance. By it He declared His right to administer the affairs of the Temple and announced His mission as the Messiah. The second cleansing occurred three years later, at the fourth Passover (see pp. 193, 247; see The Duration of Christ's Ministry; see on Matt. 21:12–17) as a reminder that His claim was still valid.

The changers of money. Or, bankers (see on Luke 19:23).

15. A scourge. Or, "whip." Jesus did not actually strike the people. The whip was symbolic of His authority, and a flourish in the air would suffice to make His intention clear. No whip is mentioned in connection with the second cleansing.

Small cords. Gr. *schoinia*, "a cord plaited of rushes."

16. My Father's house. The Temple was God's dwelling place among men (see Ex. 25:8). Again and again the Jews criticized Jesus for speaking of God as His Father (see John 5:17, 18; 8:18, 19, 38, 39; 10:30–33). They also claimed God as their Father (ch. 8:41), but realized that Jesus did so in a higher sense. They perceived that, in these words, Jesus set forth an unqualified claim to divinity. At the second cleansing Jesus spoke of the Temple as "my house" (Matt. 21:13), and when the leaders rejected His final appeal the following day He referred to it as "your house" (Matt. 23:38).

An house of merchandise. That is, a market place, a place for the transaction of common business. At the second cleansing He used the expression "den of thieves" (see on Matt. 21:13). Those today who conscientiously seek to make their Father's house a "house of prayer" (Matt. 21:13) will avoid making it a place for common thoughts, words, or actions. They will enter His house with awe and reverence, conscious of His holy presence, heart and mind uplifted in prayer and praise (see John 4:23, 24; cf. Ps. 96:9).

17. His disciples remembered. Probably at the very time (cf. v. 22).

Zeal. Gr. *zēlos*, "zeal," "ardor," "indignation," "jealousy." This is a citation from Ps. 69:9 (see comment there). Jesus earnestly desired that His Father's house should be used exclusively for the purpose to which it had been dedicated (see on Ex. 25:8, 9; Matt. 21:13).

Eaten me up. That is, "consumed me." With Jesus, loyalty to God was a consuming passion. So it should be with us.

18. The Jews. John's characteristic designation for the religious leaders of the nation.

Sign. Gr. *sēmeion* (see p. 208; see on Isa. 7:14; Matt. 12:38, 39). The leaders demanded evidence that Jesus had the right to assume direction of the affairs of the Temple. His act posed a direct challenge to their authority, one that they could not overlook (cf. on John 1:19, 25). As usual, the demand for a "sign," of the kind these critics desired, went unanswered (see on Matt. 12:38, 39; Luke 23:8).

19. Destroy this temple. Here the word for temple is *naos*, the sanctuary proper (see on v. 14). In these words Jesus intimates for the first time the fate that awaited Him at the end of His earthly pathway. The Jews were already plotting His death (see DA 164). At

His trial they distorted this declaration into the charge that He purposed to destroy the Temple, and made the charge their excuse for fulfilling Christ's prophecy (cf. Mark 14:58; see on Matt. 26:61).

The analogy between the literal Temple and Christ's body is not as remote as might at first appear. The sanctuary, and later the Temple, was designed to be the earthly dwelling place of God (see on Ex. 25:8, 9). There, above the mercy seat, appeared the Shekinah, glorious symbol of the sacred abiding presence of God (see on Gen. 3:24; Ex. 25:17). But, as John has already pointed out (see on John 1:14), this same divine glory tabernacled in human flesh in the person of our Lord. Compare 1 Cor. 3:16.

Three days. See pp. 248-250.

Raise it up. Jesus referred to His resurrection (see on ch. 10:18). But the Jews, not fully understanding the import of the declaration, thought of the literal Temple structure. That eventually they did discern the true import of Jesus' words appears from Matt. 27:63, 64.

20. Forty and six years. See pp. 242, 243. Taken literally of the Temple, Jesus' obviously figurative statement became a manifest absurdity. The Jews consistently refused to see beneath the surface meaning of His words, or to see in Him anything more than the common man He appeared to be (see ch. 7:15, 20, 33-36; see on chs. 5:17, 18; 8:52-59; 9:29; etc.). This superficial interpretation of the life and teachings of Jesus has been typical of Judaism down to the present time.

21. But he spake. See on John 2:19, 20; cf. 1 Cor. 3:16, 17.

22. When therefore. That is, when the prediction had been fulfilled (cf. on Matt. 17:9). It was only from the viewpoint of Jesus' ministry as a whole that the disciples were able to understand the deeper meaning of some of His words and acts. After the resurrection the Holy Spirit led them into a more perfect understanding of the meaning of His words and deeds (see John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13).

The scripture. John seems to have in mind a particular passage of Scripture, possibly Ps. 16:10, or 69:9, cited in v. 17. He may refer in a general way to all the OT Messianic prophecies, whose import the disciples understood more fully after the resurrection (cf. on Luke 24:25-27, 44; John 12:16).

The word. That is, the saying of Jesus recorded in v. 19.

23. The passover. See on v. 13.

Many believed. This is the first report of public response to Jesus' message. John repeatedly notes that, upon various occasions, "many believed" (see chs. 4:39; 11:45; 12:42; see on ch. 1:12). This marks the opening of the Judean ministry, which continued for many months and formally closed at the Passover of A.D. 29 (see Additional Note on Luke 4; The Ministry of Our Lord; see on Matt. 4:12).

The miracles. This is the only record of miracles during the period of the Judean ministry. The only specific miracle mentioned is the one that marked its close, the healing of the man at the Pool of Bethesda (ch. 5:1-9).

24. Commit himself. Or, "trust himself," that is, to those who professed to believe in Him (v. 23). He knew that many of those now so eager to acclaim Him would, like the people of Galilee two years later, turn away and walk no more with Him (cf. ch. 6:66). He knew the fickleness of the human heart, and how many fair-weather converts were heedless or hypocritical (see ch. 6:64). See on ch. 7:2-9.

25. *What was in man.* Jesus often read men's thoughts, thereby giving them evidence of His divinity (see on Mark 2:8).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 AH 99, 100, 503; DA 144; ML 186; Te 193
1–11AH 341; DA 144–153; 7T 114
3, 4 DA 146
4 DA 147, 486
5 6T 415
5–10DA 148
7–9GW 206; MH 333
12, 13 DA 154
12–22DA 154–166
13, 14 DA 157
14, 15 MB 2; MM 122
15, 16 DA 158
16 DA 591; MYP 316; 8T 250
17 DA 158; 4T 396
17–19DA 785
18 DA 192
18–20DA 164
19 DA 165, 777
19, 21 DA 705

CHAPTER 3

1 *Christ teacheth Nicodemus the necessity of regeneration.* 14 *Of faith in his death.* 16 *The great love of God towards the world.* 18 *Condemnation for unbelief.* 23 *The baptism, witness, and doctrine of John concerning Christ.*

1. Nicodemus. [*Discussion With Nicodemus, John 3:1–21.* See Judean Ministry from First Passover A.D. 28; The Ministry of Our Lord.] A Greek name meaning “conqueror of the people.” By NT times many Jews had adopted Greek names. The disciples Andrew, Philip, Didymus, and Alphaeus bore such names. Nicodemus was a man of wealth, a Pharisee, and a member of the national council, the Sanhedrin.

The chapter division obscures the relationship of the narrative of ch. 3 to the closing verses of ch. 2. The interview with Nicodemus illustrates the statement of ch. 2:25, that Jesus “knew what was in man” (see on ch. 3:3). He recognized in this leader a sincere seeker for truth, one to whom He could “commit” a clearer and more complete knowledge of His mission than He could to most men (ch. 2:24). Nicodemus was a noteworthy exception to the general principle stated in ch. 2:24, 25. Thus, at the very beginning of His public ministry, Jesus won a friend whose influence providentially thwarted the plans of the leaders to bring His labors to an untimely close (see ch. 7:50, 51; cf. ch. 19:39; DA 176, 460).

A ruler. That is, a member of the Sanhedrin (see p. 67).

The Jews. See on ch. 1:19.

2. Came to Jesus. This visit took place on the Mount of Olives (DA 168; cf. pp. 685, 686), probably not long after the First Cleansing of the Temple, recorded in ch. 2:13–17. Nicodemus had witnessed that dramatic incident (see DA 168), and had no doubt heard Jesus and witnessed some of His miracles (ch. 2:23). He certainly shared with other Jews

the hope for a political Messiah who would free the nation from the shackles of Rome (see on Luke 4:19), and must have been perplexed as Jesus explained the spiritual nature of His kingdom. Nicodemus was cautious by nature, and did not openly declare himself a follower of the humble Nazarene until after the crucifixion (John 19:39; cf. DA 177). The seed planted upon this occasion fell on fertile ground, eventually to bring forth a bountiful harvest.

By night. Aware of the attitude of the leaders generally toward Jesus, Nicodemus considered it wise not to compromise his reputation or position by letting it be known that he took Jesus seriously enough to seek a personal interview with Him. This precaution lent weight to Nicodemus' efforts to divert the leaders from their purpose to arrest Jesus.

Rabbi. See on ch. 1:38.

We know. Nicodemus was satisfied with the evidence of divine approval apparent in Jesus' words and works. The other leaders enjoyed equal opportunity to observe and consider the nature of Jesus' credentials (see ch. 2:18–20), and no doubt knew as well as Nicodemus the conclusion to which the evidence pointed, but pride and perversity of heart prevented them from acknowledging its validity as Nicodemus did. He was one of the “many” of ch. 2:23 who “believed.”

A teacher. Gr. *didaskalos* (see on ch. 1:38), a title of respect. Nicodemus was himself a “master [*didaskalos*] of Israel” (ch. 3:10), yet was willing to accept Jesus—who had no formal education and no official permission to teach—as his equal. The only explanation of this visit is that he sensed in his own heart the fact that Jesus was more than simply a teacher. At first, however, pride kept him from revealing his inmost thought, that Jesus might be the Messiah. But when his reaction is contrasted with that of the other leaders of the nation, the extent to which his ardent desire for truth overcame pride is surprising.

From God. These words are in the emphatic position in Greek. By them Nicodemus acknowledged that the miracles of Jesus constituted credentials of more than human authority.

No man. The miracles (see ch. 2:23) constituted evidence of divine power that could not be gainsaid. Upon later occasions Jesus directed the attention of the Jewish leaders to the significance of His miracles as attesting His divine mission (see chs. 5:36; 10:38; cf. DA 406; Vol. 5, p. 209).

That thou doest. The personal pronoun “thou” is emphatic. The miracles of Jesus differed from those of other men; they gave evidence of being genuine.

Except God be with him. The miracles attested to divine approval and recognition. Nicodemus followed the evidence through to its logical conclusion.

3. Verily, verily. See on ch. 1:51. Jesus disregarded the proffered compliment and directed His reply to the unspoken appeal for truth implicit in the fact that Nicodemus had sought Him out for a private interview.

Again. Gr. *anōthen*, which elsewhere in John means “from above” (chs. 3:31; 19:11; etc.). The word may properly be used in either sense, and it is not certain which meaning Jesus intended here. It is clear that Nicodemus understood it in the sense of “again” (v. 4), but Jesus probably meant “from above,” the sense in which *anōthen* is used later in the same chapter (v. 31). To be sure, the birth Jesus here refers to is a second birth, but it is not a repetition of the first birth, as the translation “again” might imply.

According to Jewish theology, to be born a son of Abraham was almost certainly a guarantee of admission into the kingdom of heaven (ch. 8:33). But in order to be saved, non-Jews must become sons of Abraham by adoption. It would not have startled Nicodemus to hear Jesus affirm that non-Jews must be “born again” in order to “see the kingdom of God,” but the idea that he, a circumspect Jew, stood outside the circle of salvation was a new and disturbing thought. Two and a half years later (ch. 8:39) Jesus explicitly declared that descent from Abraham is to be reckoned by moral likeness rather than by physical relationship. Compare Paul’s teachings on the same point (Rom. 2:28, 29; 9:6, 7; 10:12, 13; Gal. 3:9, 28, 29; etc.). Conversion and birth are alike in that both mark the beginning of new life (see on John 1:13; Rom. 6:3–6; 2 Cor. 5:17; cf. Eph. 4:22–24; Col. 3:9–11).

See. That is, “enter into” (v. 5).

The kingdom of God. Jesus here refers primarily to His spiritual kingdom, the kingdom of divine grace (see on Matt. 4:17; 5:2).

4. Can he enter? Nicodemus knew that Jesus did not speak of physical rebirth, and his response does not imply that he actually thought so. He simply acknowledges the impossibility. But the alternative conclusion appears to him to be equally incredible—the idea that he, a devout Jew, stands in need of the experience Jesus mentions. He faces a dilemma, unable to accept the first alternative and unwilling to accept the other.

5. Verily, verily. See on Matt. 5:18; John 1:51.

Water and of the Spirit. Jesus now explains what it means to be “born from above” (see on ch. 1:12, 13). The reference to “water” is a clear allusion to water baptism, which was administered to Jewish proselytes and was practiced by the Essenes (see pp. 63, 91). Furthermore, for many months John had been baptizing his fellow Jews in the river Jordan (Matt. 3:5, 6, 11). Yet the Pharisees, who affected a superior degree of righteousness, refused baptism (Luke 7:30) because John made it the symbol of repentance (see on Matt. 3:6). Nicodemus had doubtless listened to John, and may have heard his statements about baptism with water (John 1:26) and with the Holy Ghost (v. 33). Nicodemus anticipated admission into the kingdom of God as a natural-born, devout Jew, but Jesus declared that anything less than a complete transformation of the life by the power of the Holy Spirit was inadequate. See on Rom. 6:3–6.

To be “born of water and of the Spirit” is equivalent to being “born again,” that is, “from above” (see on John 3:3). Those who are born from above have God as their Father and resemble Him in character (see 1 John 3:1–3; cf. John 8:39, 44). Henceforth, they aspire, by the grace of Christ, to live above sin (Rom. 6:12–16) and do not yield their wills to commit sin (1 John 3:9; 5:18).

6. Born of the flesh. That is, by natural birth (see ch. 1:13). The principle in the natural world, that all living things reproduce “after their kind” (Gen. 1:21), is equally true in the spiritual world. In the NT “flesh” and “Spirit” are opposites, and represent two antithetical and exclusive planes of existence. Compare Rom. 6:12–18.

8. Wind. Gr. *pneuma*, “spirit,” “breath,” “wind.” Here the latter meaning is obviously intended.

So is every one. Like the wind, the new birth is invisible. The argument that because the new birth is not apparent to the natural eyesight it is therefore a figment of the imagination, is no more valid than it would be if used of the wind. In each case judgment is to be based on the effects produced.

10. A master of Israel. Literally, “the teacher of Israel.” Nicodemus was personally perplexed by things he should have been teaching to others.

11. Verily, verily. See on Matt. 5:18; John 1:51.

We speak. Jesus momentarily speaks in the plural, perhaps because He is stating a general principle, one true both of Himself and of Nicodemus. What Nicodemus had said (v. 9) made evident that, for “a master of Israel” (v. 10), he did not know very much. Nicodemus’ statements and questions reveal that he does not know. His knowledge of salvation was only theoretical, and was based on a false theory at that. If Nicodemus had experienced the new birth, he would not only understand it himself, but be able to speak intelligently of it to others. Some suggest that by “we” Jesus refers to the members of the Godhead.

Ye receive not. If he persists in misunderstanding whereof Jesus speaks, Nicodemus will class himself with the perverse souls of ch. 1:11, who “received him not.”

12. Earthly things. The distinction here between “earthly things” and “heavenly things” is not altogether clear. Perhaps by “earthly things” Jesus refers to elementary principles of salvation, such as the new birth. In contrast, “heavenly things” would be the deeper mysteries of God into which, perhaps, only a teacher in Israel might be expected to have insight. Nicodemus was still struggling away with the elementary principles and altogether unprepared to discuss more profound truths (cf. 1 Cor. 3:1, 2; Heb. 5:12–14).

13. No man. No man can speak with authority about “heavenly things” unless he has been in heaven (cf. v. 11). Men discern the secrets of heaven only by revelation, never by speculating about them.

Ascended up to heaven. That is, no human being has gone to heaven to learn of “heavenly things” (v. 12). Only the Son of man, who came from heaven, has ever been there, and He alone can reveal them. There is no reference here to Christ’s ascension to heaven following the resurrection.

Came down from heaven. Compare ch. 6:33, 38, 41, 42, 50, 51, 58; see on ch. 1:14.

Son of man. Jesus’ characteristic title for Himself, use of which here is evidence that Jesus is still speaking. See on Mark. 2:10.

Which is in heaven. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of this clause. If retained, it refers to the timeless existence of Jesus in heaven, His permanent abode. Possibly, however, the phrase was added by a later scribe, and thus at a time when Jesus was once more “in heaven.”

14. The serpent. See on Num. 21:6–9.

Even so. In the wilderness the earnest gaze of faith brought healing. “Even so” faith in the infinite sacrifice of Calvary brings healing from the ravages of sin. On His last day of teaching in the Temple Jesus declared, “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (ch. 12:32). In John the expression “lifted up” always refers to the crucifixion (see chs. 8:28; 12:34; etc.). The gospel record cites no other instance at this early period of His ministry upon which Jesus revealed the profound truth here told to Nicodemus. As he saw Jesus hanging on the cross Nicodemus must have remembered vividly the figure of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness, and Jesus’ words about His being “lifted up.” But this event, which blasted the hopes of the disciples, convinced Nicodemus of the divinity of the Son of God (DA 775, 776). Of the Synoptics, only Matthew (ch. 20:19) quotes Jesus foretelling His death by crucifixion.

Must. Or, “it is necessary that.” Wherever Jesus uses this word in reference to Himself (see chs. 9:4; 10:16; 12:34; cf. ch. 20:9) He affirms the divine necessity that brought Him to this earth for the accomplishment of the plan of salvation. See on Luke 2:49.

Most commentators hold that the words of Jesus close with v. 15, and that beginning with v. 16 we have the comments of the evangelist.

15. Believeth. See on chs. 1:12; 3:16.

Should not perish. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of these words in v. 15, but attests them in v. 16.

16. God so loved. The English word “love” is altogether inadequate to express the depth of solicitous interest expressed by the Greek words *agapē*, “love,” and *agapaō*, “to love” (see on Matt. 5:43). Love is the pre-eminent attribute of the Creator with respect to His creatures. It is the controlling force in divine government. “God is love” (1 John 4:8).

John speaks of himself as “that disciple whom Jesus loved” (ch. 21:7; cf. chs. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:20), that is, loved pre-eminently. The reason was simply that John, more than any of his fellow disciples, submitted to the influence of the perfect life of Jesus and eventually came to understand and reflect the perfection of that life more fully than they (see pp. 891, 892). John was thus better qualified than the other disciples to appreciate the magnitude of divine love and to explain it to his fellow men. This he attempts to do in ch. 3:16—“God so loved.” In 1 John 3:1 he exclaims again, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us.” Words fail him to express the depth of that eternal, changeless love, and John simply invites men to “behold” it. The supreme expression of divine love is the Father’s gift of His own Son (John 3:16), through whom it becomes possible for us to be “called the sons of God” (1 John 3:1). “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

The world. Gr. *kosmos*, the world as a created, organized entity (see on Matt. 4:8).

God’s love embraces all mankind, but directly benefits only those who respond to it (see on John 1:12). Love requires reciprocity in order to be fully effective. But significantly, God’s love embraces those who reject it as well as those who accept it. None of the lost can accuse God of not loving them. To assert that God has predestined certain persons to be lost irrespective of their own choice in the matter is to say that He hates them. It is to stigmatize Him as unjust and place upon Him the blame for their fate. See Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:19; see on John 3:17–20.

That he gave. Love is genuine only when it is in action. God’s love for sinners led Him to give all that He had for their salvation (see Rom. 5:8). It is the essence of love to sacrifice self for others; selfishness is the antithesis of love.

His only begotten Son. Literally, “his only Son” (see Additional Note on Chapter 1; see on Luke 1:35; John 1:14).

Whosoever. There are no limits to the love of God. There are none to whom He arbitrarily refuses the benefits of saving grace. There is but one condition—belief in, and willing cooperation with, Christ. See on ch. 1:12. It is God’s goodness that leads men to repentance (Rom. 2:4). It is the sunshine of His love that melts hard hearts, brings back the lost, and makes sinners into saints.

Believeth. See on ch. 1:12.

Perish. Gr. *apollumi*, “to utterly destroy,” “to blot out,” “to vanish into nothingness.” “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). The opposite of “everlasting life” is not everlasting misery, but eternal annihilation, everlasting death. Sin has within itself the seeds of dissolution. Death ensues, not simply because God wills it, but because the sinner chooses to separate himself from God, the source of life.

Everlasting life. Gr. *zōē aiōnios*. In John the adjective *aiōnios*, “everlasting,” appears only with the word *zōē*, “life” (chs. 3:15, 16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:25, 50; 17:2, 3). For the meaning of *zōē* see on ch. 1:4, and of *aiōnios*, see on Matt. 25:41. The Greek of John 3:16 reads literally, “might keep on having everlasting life.” “Everlasting life” is life that lasts forever, life that has no end. It becomes possible only through unbroken connection with the Source of all life.

In 1 John 5:11 the evangelist stresses the fact that God *has* “given to us eternal life [*zōēn aiōnion*].” The gift of everlasting life was made when God gave the unspeakable gift of His only Son. It is the privilege of the sincere Christian to rejoice that he *has* “everlasting life” *now*, as a gift of God, and “this life is in his Son” (1 John 5:11; cf. ch. 3:2). “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:12). The possession of everlasting life is conditional upon Christ’s abiding in the heart by faith. He who believes *has* everlasting life, and has “passed from death unto life” (see on John 5:24, 25; 6:54; 8:51).

17. God sent. Equivalent to “God ... gave” (John 3:16; cf. Matt. 15:24; Mark 9:37; Luke 4:18, 43). John is not here concerned with the theological relationship between the One sent and the One who sent Him, but rather with the purpose of the sending (see on Matt. 1:23). The sending of Jesus implies neither superiority in the Sender nor inferiority in the One sent. Throughout eternity past Christ was “equal with God” (Ev 615; see on John 1:1).

His Son. See on Luke 1:35; John 1:14.

Into the world. That is, at the incarnation (see on ch. 1:14).

To condemn the world. John hastens to explain (vs. 18, 19) that those who do not believe in the Son are “condemned already,” simply because they refuse to believe. God’s purpose in sending His Son into the world is to save the world. If, because of the coming of the Saviour, some men incur condemnation, God cannot be blamed. Condemnation results, not from the coming of the true Light (see on ch. 1:4–9), from men deliberately turning from the Light because of a preference for darkness. The Jews thought of the Messiah coming as a judge to condemn unbelievers (see on Luke 4:19), and of the angels rejoicing over the destruction of the lost (see on ch. 15:7). But Christ came not to condemn the world, as it deserved, but to save it (cf. DA 25).

Through him. See on Matt. 1:21; Luke 19:10. God willed that all men should be saved, and by the great gift of His Son provided for their salvation. But the will of God must be confirmed by the will of each individual man in order that it may become effective for him. Salvation is only for those who believe and receive Christ (see on John 1:12; 3:16).

18. Condemned already. As those who believe in Christ are justified by virtue of their faith in Him, so those who do not believe are automatically condemned because of their lack of faith. That some should reject Christ was never the Father’s will, and those

who do so thereby bring judgment upon themselves. It is the absence of saving faith that results in condemnation. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). This condemnation was not the object of the Saviour's coming into the world, but for those who do not believe it is one inevitable result of His coming. God has predetermined that those who believe shall be saved and that those who do not believe shall be lost, but He has left it to every man to choose whether or not to believe. In this sense the case of every believer and every unbeliever, every saint and every sinner, was settled when the plan of salvation was first laid, but it was left to every individual to choose whether he would be a saint or a sinner. This is Bible predestination. In the final judgment, sentence will be passed on men individually, as, long ago, it was passed on them collectively. See on John 3:19; 5:29; Eph. 1:3–12.

The name. See on ch. 1:12.

Only begotten. See on ch. 1:14.

Son of God. See Additional Note on Chapter 1; see on Luke 1:35.

19. Condemnation. Gr. *krisis*, the process of judging, not *krima*, the sentence, or the result, of judging.

Light is come. See on ch. 1:4, 5, 9. Here John explains how condemnation comes upon men. It is not because God has willed that some men be lost (see on ch. 3:18), but because some men have preferred darkness to light. The sentence is not arbitrary, but the inevitable result of the law that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Every man's fate is determined by his own reaction to the light. While men remain unenlightened there is no condemnation (Ps. 87:4, 6; Eze. 3:18–21; 18:2–32; 33:12–20; Luke 23:34; John 15:22; Rom. 7:7, 9; 1 Tim. 1:13), but when the light of truth shines into their hearts "they have no cloke for their sin" (John 15:22). Men who are unwilling to give up their evil ways prefer darkness, and in so doing blind themselves to the light (2 Cor. 4:4). On the other hand, Jesus has promised that those who choose to follow Him "shall not walk in darkness" (John 8:12) and that no one shall be able to "pluck" them out of His hand (ch. 10:28).

20. Hateth the light. Only one who hates the light of truth will be blinded by the evil one (see on v. 19). He avoids the light for the same reason that a thief avoids a policeman.

21. Doeth truth. That is, earnestly longs for the principles of truth to become more fully operative in his life. With Paul, such a person acknowledges that in himself "dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18), and that credit for a victorious life belongs to God, who has made it possible through Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:1–4; 1 Cor. 15:57; Gal. 2:20). See on Matt. 5:48.

22. After these things. [*Ministry in Judea*, John 3:22–36. See Retirement from Public Ministry; The Duration of Christ's Ministry, the Opening of the Galilean Ministry, The Ministry of Our Lord.] Gr. *meta tauta*, a common transitional phrase (see chs. 5:1; 6:1; 7:1). "These things," the events of chs. 2:13 to 3:21, took place at the Passover of A.D. 28 or soon thereafter.

His disciples. John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael (see ch. 1:40–45).

Into the land of Judæa. The events of chs. 2:13 to 3:21 occurred in or near Jerusalem. From Jerusalem, Jesus now extended His ministry to the towns and villages of Judea, where He labored for a period of some eight months, from about April to December of the year A.D. 28 (see The Duration of Christ's Ministry, Opening of the

Galilean Ministry, The Ministry of Our Lord; see Additional Note on Luke 4). Except for the brief account of John 3:22–36 the gospel record is silent concerning the details of this period of our Lord’s ministry.

Jesus devoted the opening phase of His public ministry to Jerusalem and Judea, with the specific objective of giving the leaders an opportunity to witness the evidences of His divine mission, to accept Him as the Messiah, and to lead the nation forward to the accomplishment of its divinely appointed task (DA 231; see Vol. IV, pp. 26-30). But despite seeming success the early Judean ministry was largely barren of practical results (see DA 194, 245). In fact, more true conversions occurred on the day of Pentecost than throughout Christ’s earthly ministry (see EGW Supplementary Material on Acts 2:1–4, 14, 41). Jesus’ great popularity (John 3:26) aroused the jealousy of John’s disciples for their master, who was simultaneously preaching and baptizing in the same region. Accordingly, about the month of December, Jesus retired temporarily to Galilee (ch. 4:1–3). He returned to Jerusalem for the Passover of A.D. 29, when His early Judean ministry came to a formal close and He transferred His efforts to Galilee (see Additional Note on Luke 4; the Opening of the Galilean Ministry; see on Matt. 4:12; Luke 4:16).

Tarried ... baptized. The Greek verbs indicate a protracted ministry. By baptizing, Jesus gave His own approval to the ministry of His forerunner, but He Himself left the actual baptizing to His disciples (ch. 4:2). Like John, Jesus no doubt sought localities where there was “much water” (ch. 3:23). Concerning the rite of baptism itself see on Matt. 3:6.

23. John also was baptizing. The ministry of John continued at least till after the time of Jesus’ temporary withdrawal from Judea, about the month of December. He was arrested and imprisoned between that time and the following Passover (see Additional Note on Luke 4; the Opening of the Galilean Ministry; see on Luke 3:19, 20).

Ænon near to Salim. The location of these ancient places is not certain. According to W. F. Albright, the most probable identification seems to be with the modern *Sâlim*, about 4 mi. (6.5 km.) southeast of Nablus and Shechem, and the nearby modern village of ‘*Ainûn* (W. F. Albright, “The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology,” in *Studies in Honor of C. H. Dodd*, p. 159). These villages are near the headwaters of the *Wâdî Fâr’ah*, where there are numerous springs. The late traditional location a few miles southeast of Scythopolis (Beth-shan) is close to the Jordan River, where it would seem pointless for John to stress that there was “much water.” This description would be significant only for a comparatively obscure locality where the possible lack of an abundant supply of water might raise a question as to how the rite of baptism could be conducted. See Palestine During the Ministry of Jesus.

Much water. This comment points to baptism by immersion, the only form of the rite in which “much water” would be indispensable. See on Matt. 3:6; Rom. 6:3–6.

24. Cast into prison. John was in prison for about one year, from about Passover time, A.D. 29, to the same time the following year (see on Luke 3:19, 20).

25. There arose a question. Although, for fear of the people (Matt. 21:26), the Jewish authorities avoided an open attack on John, they sought less conspicuous ways of hindering his work. Baptism was central to John’s preaching (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3), as a symbol of repentance and cleansing from sin. The Jews practiced proselyte baptism, for the ceremonial purification of Gentile converts (see on John 3:3–5). But John required

Jews to accept the rite, and made it a token of repentance, and of turning from a life of sin. It is true that the Essenes practiced baptism more nearly in the sense in which John administered it (see pp. 63, 91), but they were few in numbers and had little influence on the life and thought of the nation.

The Jews. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the reading “a Jew.”

Purifying. That is, ceremonial washing.

26. Rabbi. See on ch. 1:38.

He that was with thee. See ch. 1:29–36.

The same baptizeth. See on ch. 4:2.

All men come to him. The preaching of John had met such popular acclaim that the scribes and priests became jealous of him (see on ch. 1:19–25). But here was a Teacher even more popular than John. John’s disciples resented the seeming success of Jesus and became jealous for their own master (cf. Mark 9:38). They felt that inasmuch as John’s baptism was characteristically his own (see on John 3:25), Jesus and others not directly associated with John and themselves had no right to administer the rite in the way and for the purpose that John did.

27. A man can receive. John acknowledged that his success had come from Heaven, and affirmed his belief that the greater success now attending Jesus’ labors must likewise be from Heaven. In both instances the initiative lay with God, and what right did men have to challenge the acts of God? John was confident of his own divine commission, and had, from the beginning, foretold the coming of One even greater than he (ch. 1:26, 27). Why should he resent the fulfillment of his own prediction?

The utter humility and selfless submission of John are characteristic traits of the true follower of Christ. John was able to say, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (ch. 3:30) only because he clearly understood his own relation to the Messiah and because the touch of divine love had transformed him (see DA 179). In vain, pride and jealousy assaulted his intellectual and emotional equilibrium.

28. Bear me witness. John’s attitude toward the Christ was already on record in the memory of his disciples.

I am not the Christ. See ch. 1:20.

I am sent before him. See on Matt. 3:3.

29. He that hath the bride. God’s relationship to His people is often compared with that of groom to bride (see Isa. 54:5; Jer. 2:2; 3:20; Eze. 16:8; 23:4; Hosea 2:19, 20; 11:2; Eph. 5:25–27; etc.). Jesus now appeared to be successfully winning the people of Israel to Himself.

Friend of the bridegroom. The “friend of the bridegroom” was the middleman who made arrangements between the family of the groom and that of the bride. He would be pleased when the transaction reached a happy climax. John had fulfilled his appointed role of calling Israel to accept her spiritual Lord and Master, and now rejoiced at the apparent success of the One on whose behalf he had labored. His own “joy” was thus “fulfilled.” See on Mark 2:19.

Standeth and heareth. Perhaps John speaks of the friend of the groom as intent on learning the wishes of the groom and carrying them out. Or, John may refer to the moment when the groom greets his bride for the first time, face to face, and the

groomsman rejoices at the successful completion of his task. Similarly, John could not regret that men were attracted to Christ; in fact, it fulfilled his fondest hopes.

30. *He must increase.* See on vs. 27, 29. It could not be otherwise, John declares. These are almost the last recorded words of John prior to his imprisonment. Surely, words more humble, more submissive, more unselfish than those of John upon this occasion have never been uttered. At the prime of his life and ministry he is summoned to retire and leave the field to others. Surely, “there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist” (Matt. 11:11).

31. *He that cometh.* A technical Jewish idiom meaning “the Messiah” (see Matt. 11:3; 21:9; 23:39; Luke 7:19; etc.; see on John 1:14).

From above. Gr. *anōthen* (see on v. 3). Christ came “from above” in order that men might be “born from above.” Because Christ came “from above,” John declares, it is only right and proper—it is necessary, in fact—for Him to be “above all” whose origin is earthly.

Of the earth. That which is earthly in origin is earthly also by nature.

Speaketh of the earth. John was “of the earth” and spoke as a man. Jesus was “from above” and spoke with wisdom “from above.” Little wonder that people turned from John to Jesus, from the lesser to the greater!

Is above all. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of this expression the second time in v. 31. If these words are omitted, v. 31 combines with v. 32 to read: “He that cometh from heaven testifieth of what he hath seen and heard.” If this expression is retained, John admits that Christ is infinitely greater than himself, greater, in fact, than all men, and refuses to consider himself a rival of Jesus.

32. *Seen and heard.* That is, what Christ has seen and heard of the character and will of the Father (see on vs. 11–13). John ever reminds his readers that the witness of Jesus concerning heavenly things originated with the Father (see chs. 8:40; 15:15; etc.).

No man receiveth. A rhetorical hyperbole emphasizing how few of the throng that followed Jesus really accepted Him as the Sent of God (cf. chs. 1:11; 2:24). That some men did, in fact, receive and believe the testimony of Jesus is apparent from ch. 3:33 (cf. ch. 1:11, 12).

33. *Hath received.* See on ch. 1:12. Some men stand as noteworthy exceptions to the general statement of the preceding verse.

Set to his seal. By affixing his personal seal to a document a person attests its accuracy and validity, thus adding his personal witness to the statement of the document itself. By receiving Jesus as the Christ a man expresses his own conviction that the message of God concerning Him “is true.”

That God is true. That is, that the message of God concerning Jesus as the Christ is true. For the negative expression of this same truth see 1 John 5:10.

34. *God hath sent.* That is, the Christ (see on chs. 1:14; 3:31). For the sense in which the Father sent the Son to this earth see on v. 17. Jesus came, not in His own name and speaking His own words, but in the name of the Father, speaking the words of the Father (cf. ch. 5:19, 30; etc.).

By measure. That is, sparingly, John declares that the reason why the ministry of Jesus has been so successful is the fact that He came “from above” (v. 31) and that, living here as a man among men, He had been filled with the Holy Spirit. John could not claim either of these qualifications in the same degree that Jesus had them, and Jesus is

therefore infinitely superior to John. At best, John could only “know in part, and ... prophesy in part” (1 Cor. 13:9). As a divine being Jesus had no need whatever for the Holy Spirit to be given Him; but as a human being, all that He had He had received from the Father.

35. Loveth the Son. As attested by the voice from heaven at His baptism (see on Matt. 3:17). Before coming to this earth Father and Son were associated together as equals in an eternal fellowship (see on John 1:1). But John here speaks of the Father’s love for His Son in His incarnate state, living on earth as a man among men. The infinite love that existed between Father and Son throughout eternity had been in no way abated by the incarnation.

Hath given all things. Even as a man among men Jesus has full authority to act in the name of the Father. Compare John 5:22, 27, 26; 13:3; 17:2, 24; etc.; see on Matt. 11:27; 28:18.

36. He that believeth. Literally, “he that keeps on believing.” To be once “in grace” is not sufficient; a man must remain “in grace” if he would enter the kingdom. A man’s standing before the Father is determined by his attitude toward the Son. See on chs. 1:12; 3:15, 16.

Believeth not. Gr. *apeitheō*, literally, “to be disobedient,” as in 1 Peter 2:7, 8.

However, *apeitheō* refers to a rebellious state of the mind and the will rather than to overt acts of disobedience. Compare Eph. 5:6, where the noun form of the same word is translated “disobedience.” The state of mind determines the course of the life. Compare John 3:18.

Not see life. That is, not participate in eternal life (see v. 16; see on v. 3). A man cannot reject Christ and expect to gain eternal life directly from the Father.

The wrath of God. See on Rom. 1:18. For the same word translated “anger” and used of Christ see on Mark 3:5. “The wrath of God” is directed against all sin. God has provided a way by which men may escape from the clutches of sin, but if they refuse to be separated from it, they will inevitably share its fate and be obliterated with it.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–3AA 104; DA 168

1–17DA 167–177

2 FE 383

2, 3 TM 367

3 AA 387; AH 206; CE 13; COL 48, 112; CS 142; CSW 64; DA 189; FE 279, 459; GC 467; ML 314, 331; SC 18, 67; TM 369; 8T 149; 9T 156

3–8COL 98

4 CSW 65; DA 171, 389

4–9TM 368

5, 6 DA 172

5–7CSW 66

7 COL 48; Ev 286; FE 459; MYP 71; SC 19; 5T 189, 339; 8T 149

8 DA 172; SC 57; 4T 585

8–10Ev 289

9 DA 175; FE 178

9, 10 DA 173; FE 459, 517; 6T 154

10–12TM 369
 11 Ev 296
 11–13FE 190
 12 DA 173
 12–16TM 370
 14 AA 104; DA 174, 175, 176, 485; FE 284
 14, 15 DA 415, 660, 775; GC 74; PP 431; 8T 50
 14–16AA 226
 15 PP 475
 16 CH 222, 507; COL 301, 316, 331; CS 19, 46; CSW 12; CT 29, 338; DA 22, 25, 390, 493; Ev 530, 546, 614; EW 115, 125, 151; FE 164, 177, 230, 295, 300, 383, 397, 427, 429, 447; GC 417, 467; GW 155, 157; MB 119; MH 62, 94, 396, 424; ML 7, 218, 361; MM 19, 20, 52; MYP 29, 138, 346; PP 63, 154; SC 13, 14; Te 289; TM 48, 81, 93, 123, 185, 189, 271, 307, 376, 486; 2T 200; 3T 369; 4T 19, 80, 145, 293, 375, 418; 5T 629, 730, 739; 6T 66, 88, 236, 283, 358, 386, 446; 7T 111, 225; 8T 10, 25, 177, 204, 234, 287; 9T 44, 50, 60, 208, 254
 16, 17 6T 273
 16–188T 208
 17 COL 212; DA 210; Ed 79; 4T 387
 19 DA 588; Ed 74; FE 258; GC 229, 265; 3T 38, 214, 426; 4T 230
 19, 20 FE 295; TM 90; 2T 352, 449, 689
 19–21CS 226
 20 GC 458; PP 74, 608; 1T 624; 2T 453; 3T 37; 5T 74
 22–36DA 178–182
 26–315T 224
 27–30GW 56; 8T 333
 29 DA 276
 30 DA 181; Ed 157; 5T 729
 31 DA 180; GW 57
 31–348T 334
 31–36TM 93
 32, 33 DA 181
 33 AA 556; MH 461; SC 112; 8T 321
 33–36TM 486
 34 DA 180; Ev 699; GW 57; ML 59
 34–36FE 392
 36 DA 181, 396; GC 533; PP 207

CHAPTER 4

1 *Christ talketh with a woman of Samaria, and revealeth himself unto her. 27 His disciples marvel. 31 He declareth to them his zeal to God's glory. 39 Many Samaritans believe on him. 43 He departeth into Galilee, and healeth the ruler's son that lay sick at Capernaum.*

1. The Lord. [*The Samaritan Woman, John 4:1–42.* See Judean Ministry from First Passover A.D. 28; The Duration of Christ's Ministry, Opening of the Galilean Ministry, The Ministry of Our Lord.] Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between this and the reading "Jesus."

Pharisees had heard. The Pharisees took advantage of the jealousy of John's disciples, occasioned by Jesus' increasing popularity, in the hope of creating dissension between John and Jesus, and thereby crippling the efforts of both. See on ch. 3:25.

More disciples. See on ch. 3:26, 30. Obviously, John was still preaching and baptizing, and had not yet been imprisoned.

2. Jesus himself. By personally accepting baptism at the hands of John, Jesus had approved the rite, declaring, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). Furthermore, Jesus' disciples performed the rite under His direction (John 3:22; 4:1). We are not told why Jesus Himself did not baptize. It may have been His purpose to avoid creating in the minds of any the idea that they possessed superior authority in the church because they had been baptized by Christ personally. Compare the dissension over the respective merits of baptism by Jesus and by the disciples (see on chs. 3:22; 4:1–3). The next mention of baptism is in connection with the gospel commission of Matt. 28:19, 20. Jesus may have discontinued the rite for a time because of the conflict occasioned by it.

3. He left Judæa. This was about the month of December, A.D. 28, or January, A.D. 29. The reason for this temporary withdrawal from Judea was to avoid useless conflict with the Pharisees on the one hand, and with John and his disciples on the other. The decision to leave Judea was prompted, not by fear, but by prudence (cf. Matt. 10:23). For a discussion of the chronological setting of this withdrawal from Judea see Additional Note on Luke 4; Opening of the Galilean Ministry.

Again into Galilee. For the previous visit to Galilee see ch. 2:1–12.

4. Through Samaria. The direct route to Galilee lay through Samaria. However, because of animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans, Galilean pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem for the great national festivals preferred the more circuitous route through the Jordan valley (see Luke 9:51, 52; see on ch. 2:42). At this time Samaria and Judea were a single political unit administered by a Roman procurator, Pontius Pilate (see pp. 45, 67; Palestine During the Ministry of Jesus; Palestine Under the Herodians). Concerning the Samaritans see Vol. III, p. 69; Vol. V, pp. 18, 45; see on 2 Kings 17:23–34.

5. Sychar. Probably the modern 'Askar. The designation "city" is commonly used in the Gospels of small towns as well as larger cities.

Parcel of ground. See Gen. 33:19; 48:22; Joshua 24:32.

6. Jacob's well. This well is situated about ten minutes' walk below the village of 'Askar, on the road to Jerusalem. No site connected with the life of Jesus is more certainly identified than this well, which still provides water for a monastery garden at the foot of Mt. Gerizim. Numerous springs in the region make it seem strange that anyone should go to the trouble of digging a well. But Jacob was a stranger in the land and may have dug the well in order to avoid an argument over water rights (cf. Gen. 26:17–22).

Being wearied. Jesus and the disciples had probably been on the road since dawn, and may have traveled 15 or 20 mi. (24 or 32 km.). John often mentions the emotions and physical limitations of Jesus as a man among men (see chs. 1:14; 11:3, 33, 35, 38; 12:27; 13:21; 19:28; see on ch. 4:7). Jesus never performed a miracle to satisfy His personal needs or to mitigate His own physical pangs of thirst or hunger (see on Matt. 4:3, 6).

On the well. That is, on the curbstone of the well.

The sixth hour. It is not certain what system of time reckoning John used (cf. chs. 1:39; 4:52; 19:14). Generally, however, it is thought that “the sixth hour” would be noon (see DA 183). Had it been evening, Jesus would probably have accompanied the disciples to Sychar or continued on to Shechem, a short distance beyond, to find lodging for the night. Also, morning and evening were the usual times for drawing water, and there would no doubt have been others at the well.

7. A woman of Samaria. That is, a woman of the Samaritan stock (see on v. 4), not a woman from the city of Samaria, which was more than two hours distant.

Give me to drink. It is comforting to know that Jesus experienced such things as thirst, hunger, weariness, and pain, even as we do (see on v. 6). He became one with us in order to succor us in whatever circumstance may arise (see on ch. 1:14).

The process of winning the woman of Samaria deserves the most careful study on the part of all who set out to win others to Christ. There were four main stages in this process: (1) The awakening of a *desire* for something better, vs. 7–15. (2) The awakening of a *conviction* of personal need, vs. 16–20. (3) The call for a *decision* to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, vs. 21–26. (4) The stimulus to *action* appropriate to the decision, vs. 28–30, 39–42. For comment on the detailed steps in each of these four stages of the process see on vs. 7, 16, 21, 28.

Jesus gained the woman’s *attention* with the request, “Give me to drink.” Her response is evident in the question of v. 9, “How is it ...?” Having thus secured her undivided attention, Jesus aroused her *interest* by the offer of “living water” (v. 10). Her reaction appears in the question as to “whence” He obtained such water (v. 11) and whether He professed to be “greater” than Jacob, who had dug the well (v. 12). From attention and interest, Jesus led her on to *desire* the “living water,” declaring that those who drink it will “never thirst” (v. 14). She responded with the request, “Sir, give me this water” (v. 15), even though she had little conception, as yet, of what she was asking for.

8. The city. That is, Sychar, about 2/3 mi. farther on the road toward Shechem.

Meat. Gr. *trophē*, “food,” “nourishment” (see on Matt. 3:4).

9. How is it? Racial hatred kept Jew and Samaritan so far apart that both avoided social contact, if at all possible. For the origin of the Samaritans see on 2 Kings 17:23–29. For the origin of the antipathy between the Jews and the Samaritans see Vol. III, p. 69; see on Ezra 4:1–3, 17–23; Neh. 2:10; 4:1, 2. For a contemporary account of trouble between the Jews and the Samaritans see Josephus *Antiquities* xx. 6. 2.

Jews have no dealings. This appears to be an explanatory comment added by John for the benefit of his non-Jewish readers, not a statement made by the woman to Jesus. However, textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of the clause. Jesus’ request startled the woman; what could be more strange than such a request coming from a Jew?

10. The gift of God. That is, Jesus Himself, as the following clause makes clear. He appears to be no more than a weary, thirsty traveler, but there is more to the offer of “living water” than the woman yet comprehends. Strange as Jesus’ request seemed on the surface, there was something even more mysterious. The significant fact about Jesus was not that He was a Jew, but that He was, and is, “the gift of God” (see John 3:16; 2 Cor. 9:15).

Who it is. Jesus is about to introduce Himself to the woman as the Messiah (see vs. 25, 26), and here tactfully leads her on to see that His proposal involves more than

appears on the surface. Jesus implied, “You can satisfy my physical thirst, but I can satisfy the thirst of your soul.”

Living water. Gr. *hudōr zōn*, “fresh water,” “flowing water,” or “life[-giving] water” (cf. Eze. 47:9). Jesus here refers to Himself (see John 7:37; cf. ch. 6:27, 51). The prophet Jeremiah spoke of the Lord as “the fountain of living waters” (chs. 2:13; 17:13; cf. Isa. 12:3; Rev. 22:1). The woman thought Jesus referred to spring water, in contrast with the comparatively stale water of the well. But if Jesus had access to literal “living water,” why would He have asked her for a drink?

11. Sir. Gr. *kurios*, “lord,” “sir,” here in the latter sense, as a title of respect. Something in the voice and manner of Jesus impressed the woman, and her nonchalant “thou, being a Jew” (v. 9) now changes to a form of address reflecting respect.

From whence? The woman still thinks that Jesus speaks of literal water. But obviously He does not refer to this well—which was 100 or more feet deep—for He has no equipment for drawing its water.

12. Art thou greater? The word “thou” is emphatic. Whom does Jesus make Himself out to be? Compare ch. 8:53.

Our father Jacob. The Samaritans claimed descent from Jacob through Joseph, and looked to Jacob as their “father” in somewhat the same way that the Jews looked to Abraham (see ch. 8:33). The spot where Jesus and the woman stood had been assigned to the descendants of Joseph (Joshua 24:32).

14. Whosoever drinketh. Literally, “whoever shall drink [once].” One drink of the “living water” Jesus has to offer will provide permanent satisfaction for thirsty souls (see on ch. 7:38).

I shall give. The word “I” is emphatic, and draws a sharp contrast between the “living water” and that from Jacob’s well.

Never thirst. Literally, “shall not [ou] not [mē] thirst into the ages [*eis ton aiōna*].” In English the three expressions *ou*, *mē*, and *eis ton aiōna* are all combined into the one word “never.” The Greek is far more emphatic than the English translation indicates. The expression *eis ton aiōna* is translated “for ever” in ch. 6:51, 58; and “never” in chs. 8:51, 52; 10:28; 11:26. For the Greek word *aiōn* see on Matt. 13:39.

In him a well. The figurative nature of the “living water” Jesus offered the woman is now fully apparent. This water satisfies the thirst of the soul for better things than this life has to offer.

Into everlasting life. Gr. *eis zōēn aiōnion* (see on ch. 3:16). For *aiōnios*, “everlasting,” see on Matt. 25:41. The result of drinking the “living water” (see on John 4:10) is a life that never ends.

15. Give me this water. Dimly aware at last of what Jesus has to offer her, the woman responds eagerly to the promises of v. 14, that if she drinks of the “living water,” she will “never thirst” and will indeed receive “everlasting life.” However, she still links the offer of “living water” with literal water, thinking that once she has obtained the “living water” she will no longer need to make the daily trip to Jacob’s Well. Perhaps she thinks that the “living water” is for herself alone, and that she will still need to draw water for her “husband” (see v. 16). But, as Jesus hastens to explain, this “living water” concerns her husband as well as herself.

16. *Call thy husband.* Having now fully awakened *desire* for the “living water” (v. 15), Jesus abruptly changes the topic of conversation. His objective in vs. 16–20 is to awaken within the woman a *conviction* of desperate need for this water (see on v. 7). This He does by focusing *attention* on the secrets of her life. She is not yet ready to receive the “living water” for which she so casually asks (v. 15). First, there are stagnant waters of sin to be removed. The old life of sin must die before the new life of righteousness can begin; the two cannot exist side by side (cf. James 3:11, 12).

But the woman parries Jesus’ insight into her life, denying that she has a husband. She prefers not to discuss private affairs with a stranger. Jesus acknowledges the accuracy of her statement (v. 17), but gives evidence that He knows far more about her than she has been willing to reveal (v. 18). Thus He convinces her that He is a prophet (see on v. 10) and that she is a great sinner. She cleverly parries the closer thrust by turning the conversation from herself back to Jesus (v. 19), and then to a general argument about religion (v. 20). Like every soul convicted of error or sin, she seeks to *escape*.

Attempts to divert conversation from unwelcome truth to moot or inconsequential religious topics are evidence of conviction that a change will be required in patterns of thought and life. Desperate efforts are put forth to evade the truth or to find reasons for ignoring or rejecting it. What is needed, however, is not a clarification of the points brought up for argument. Jesus wasted no time discussing either His status as a “prophet” or the matter of where to worship. Instead, He simply directed the woman’s attention (1) to the spirit of true worship, and (2) to Himself as the Christ. These are the very points needed to bring men to a decision today (see on v. 21).

17. *I have no husband.* This is the woman’s first attempt to keep the secrets of her life concealed (see on v. 16).

18. *Five husbands.* Jesus now lays her past life completely bare, giving evidence that to Him the secrets of her life are an open book (see on ch. 1:48). She is a sinful woman, sorely in need of the “living water” He generously offers her.

19. *Thou art a prophet.* The woman evades a discussion of her own life by changing the subject of conversation to a line of thought that has no personal implications. If she can involve Jesus in a religious dispute, it will spare her the embarrassment of confessing the dark deeds of her own past.

20. *This mountain.* That is, Mt. Gerizim, at whose foot lay Sychar and Jacob’s Well. The Samaritans had erected a temple on Gerizim about 432 B.C. but this had lain in ruins since its destruction by John Hyrcanus about 129 B.C. (see p. 33). For comment on the Samaritans and their religion see pp. 18, 45.

Men ought to worship. To this woman, as to most Jews and Samaritans, religion consisted essentially in the forms connected with worship. She did not yet realize that “true worshippers” are those who “worship the Father in spirit and in truth” (v. 23).

21. *Woman, believe me.* This is the only NT use of the emphatic expression “believe me.” Compare the solemn affirmation, “verily, verily” (see on ch. 1:51). Jesus solemnly appeals to the woman to forget the forms of worship and the traditional controversy between Jew and Samaritan as to where these forms should be practiced.

The hour cometh. See v. 23.

Ye. In Greek the word is plural, thus including all Samaritans who truly worship God.

Neither in this mountain. The worship of God would not be restricted to any particular locality—Judea, Samaria, or elsewhere.

Having awakened in the woman a *desire* for “living water,” whatever it might be, and a *conviction* of her personal need for it, Jesus now proceeds to guide her to the point of decision (vs. 21–27). He brings her wandering thoughts to a *focus* by defining true religion (vs. 21–23), extends to her an *invitation* to become a true worshiper (vs. 23, 24), and then leads her to the point of *decision* by identifying Himself as the Messiah (v. 26), and thus as one who speaks with spiritual authority. He completely disarmed her prejudice and foiled her attempt to evade the issue by making it clear that He did not share the religious bias that separated the Jews from the Samaritans. Both might become “true worshippers.” Eventually there is to be but one “fold” (ch. 10:16). She responds by an honest declaration of faith in the Messianic hope, which the Samaritans shared. Her prompt action (ch. 4:28, 29), testified eloquently of her decision. Jesus here envisions a day when the Jews will cease to be God’s chosen people.

22. *Salvation.* Literally, “*the salvation*,” meaning the only salvation there is (see Acts 4:12). Samaritanism was a combination of apostate Hebrew religion and heathenism (see pp. 18, 45). The Samaritans took the Pentateuch as their Bible and claimed to be more orthodox than the Jews, but they worshiped God blindly—they knew not what they worshiped—and therefore worshiped Him “in vain” (see Mark 7:7). In the providence of God the Jews had been made His chosen witnesses to the nations of earth (see Vol. IV, pp. 26–30). They became the recipients and appointed custodians of His revealed will (see Rom. 3:1, 2; 9:3–5). Jesus therefore affirms the absolute superiority of the Jewish religion, having already made it clear that that superiority is in no way related to the place of worship (John 4:21). The superiority of Judaism consisted in the fact that God had chosen the Hebrew people to be His representatives on earth, that He had entrusted to them the divine oracles, and that the Messiah was to be a Jew (Rom. 9:4, 5).

23. *Now is.* The “hour” of v. 21, when the place of worship ceases to be a matter of importance, is here *now*. It is not necessary to struggle on in the rut of the past. It is not necessary to await some future time to enter into true worship, to receive the “living water.” Jerusalem has been the appointed place of worship (see v. 21), and will remain so for a brief time longer, but true worship may begin “now.” It is not *where*, but *how*, one worships that counts.

True worshippers. That is, those whose worship is of the heart, rather than worship consisting essentially of ritual forms conducted at some particular place.

In spirit and in truth. That is, in all sincerity, with the highest faculties of the mind and emotions, applying the principles of truth to the heart (see on Matt. 5:3, 48; 7:21–27; Mark 7:6–9). This is genuine worship, Jesus says; all else is false. The same distinction here made between true worship and the forms of worship is clearly stated by the prophet Micah (ch. 6:7, 8).

The Father seeketh. The Father is not a far-off deity, unconcerned with His children, but is interested in them individually (see Isa. 57:15). He not only accepts “true worshippers” but anxiously “seeketh” those willing to worship Him “in spirit and in truth,” and encourages them to come to Him (see Eze. 18:31, 32; John 3:16; Acts 17:24–31; 2 Peter 3:9). Salvation is not the result of men’s feeble efforts at seeking out an indifferent God, but of the unwearied efforts of a heavenly Father who, with solicitous compassion, seeks for His lost children (see on Matt. 18:12–14; John 10:1–21). John

repeatedly emphasizes this truth (see John 3:16; 6:44; 15:16; 1 John 4:10). Compare the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son (Luke 15:1–32).

24. *God is a Spirit.* Literally, “God [is] spirit.” As an infinite spirit being, God is not subject to the same limitations as finite material beings, and consequently is not so much concerned with visible places and forms of worship as He is with the spirit in which men worship Him (see on v. 22).

25. *I know.* In the woman’s mind true worship is appropriately linked with thoughts of the coming Messiah. The Samaritans based their Messianic hopes on the prediction of Deut. 18:15, 18. They commonly referred to the Messiah as Taheb, meaning “the returning One,” or “the Restorer.”

Called Christ. This is evidently an explanatory phrase added by John for the benefit of his non-Jewish readers (see on ch. 1:38).

26. *I that speak.* The way had been fully prepared for this startling revelation, which brought the conversation to an abrupt close. Had Jesus not manifested supernatural knowledge of her life (see on vs. 17–19), and had she not already acknowledged Him to be “a prophet”? Thinking of Deut. 18:15, 18, she had expressed the belief that when the Messiah came He would “tell us all things” (John 4:25), and now this “prophet” declared Himself to be the Messiah. Naturally she concluded: He is not only “a prophet,” but *the* Prophet whom Moses foretold.

27. *Marvelled.* Or, “were surprised.” Among the Jews it was considered highly improper for a man, and beneath the dignity of a rabbi, to converse with a woman in public. An ancient Jewish literary work, *Aboth R. N.* 2 (1d), advises, “Let no one talk with a woman in the street, no, not with his own wife” (cited in Strack and Billerbeck, vol. 2, p. 438). In the Mishnah the men are admonished, “Engage not in too much conversation with women” (*Aboth* 1. 5, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 4; cf. Talmud ‘*Erubin* 53b, Soncino ed., p. 374).

No man said. Out of respect for their Master the disciples said nothing, either to Him or to the woman.

28. *Left her waterpot.* She was on the point of leaving, her waterpot filled (DA 183), when the disciples returned from the village with food for Jesus. She was eager to reach the village and tell others of her great discovery, and did not care to be slowed by the heavy waterpot. She had experienced *desire*, *conviction*, and *decision* (see on v. 7), and the next logical step was *action*—she went to tell others of her great discovery. This testified to the reality of her decision. The waiting waterpot was mute evidence of her intention to return without delay.

29. *All things.* The woman’s announcement was somewhat exaggerated. Apparently she reasoned that if Jesus knew the deep, dark secrets of her life, nothing else could be hid from Him.

This the Christ. For the connection between the evidence presented—Jesus’ supernatural knowledge—and the conclusion that He must be the Christ see on v. 26. Tactfully the woman states her discovery in the form of a question, and invites the villagers to go forth and examine the evidence for themselves. Compare Philip’s invitation to Nathanael: “Come and see” (see ch. 1:46).

30. *They went out.* The woman’s report impressed the villagers and stirred them to investigate. At first their belief was based on the woman’s report, but after due investigation, on their own experience (see vs. 39, 42).

31. Master, eat. Being solicitous for their Master's welfare (see v. 6), the disciples had spared Him the unnecessary effort of purchasing the food. They did what they could to lighten the load for Him. For comment on the word "Master," *rhabbi*, see on ch. 1:38.

32. Meat. Gr. *brōsis*, "food" of any kind (cf. on v. 8). The eager response of the woman was more refreshing to the soul of Jesus than food would have been to His body. Material things are of minor importance in the estimation of all who truly become laborers together with Christ. The relative importance Christian workers attach to material things as compared with things of the spirit is an index to their devotion (see on Matt. 20:15).

33. Hath any man brought? The form of the question in Greek anticipates a negative answer. The disciples do not actually believe Jesus has eaten, but are perplexed to find Him no longer hungry (see v. 6).

34. My meat. See on v. 32. Jesus lived for the one purpose of doing His Father's will (see on Matt. 4:4; Luke 2:49; John 6:38). Most men live for "the meat which perisheth" (John 6:27), but Jesus had no appetite for anything except "that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." The material requirements of life were incidental to His great objective of accomplishing man's salvation (see on Matt. 6:24–34; John 6:26–58).

Him that sent me. For the sense in which the Father "sent" Jesus into the world see on ch. 3:17. John often quotes Jesus with respect to His divine mission (John 3:17, 5:30, 36, 37; 6:38, 44; 7:18, 28, 33; 8:16, 18, 26, 29; 9:4; 10:25, 32, 37; 12:44, 49; 13:20; 14:10, 24, 31; 15:21; 16:5; 17:4; see on Luke 2:49).

Finish his work. That is, the "work" for which God sent His Son into the world (see on Matt. 1:21; John 17:4).

35. Harvest. In Palestine grain was sown in the autumn and harvested in the spring (see Vol. II, pp. 108–110). Since the grain harvest in regions like Sychar came in April or May, it was now probably about the month of December or January (see Additional Note on Luke 4; Opening of the Galilean Ministry; cf. DA 191).

Look on the fields. The disciples could see the villagers making their way through the fields of growing grain (DA 191) to the well. The seed of truth sown in the heart of this woman of Samaria had already begun to bear fruit, and the next two days saw a plentiful harvest (see vs. 39–42).

36. Reapeth. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) reading the word "already" of v. 35 with v. 36. Verse 36 would then begin, "Already he that reapeth receiveth wages." With the Samaritan woman, seed sowing had scarcely been completed when the glorious time for harvest arrived (cf. James 5:7).

Gathereth fruit. See on Matt. 13:30.

Life eternal. See on ch. 3:16.

Rejoice together. See Ps. 126:5, 6; Isa. 9:3; see on Luke 15:7.

37. One soweth. Perhaps Jesus thinks of Himself as the sower and of the disciples as the reapers (see John 4:38; cf. Matt. 9:37, 38; 10:1), and envisions the greater harvest in Samaria following His resurrection (see on Acts 8:6–8, 14, 25). In the harvest of souls it is often true that the one who sows the gospel seed is not the one who has the privilege of harvesting the crop (cf. 1 Cor. 3:6, 7). For Jesus as the sower of good seed see on Matt. 13:3–8, 18–23.

38. I sent you to reap. Jesus apparently refers to the Judean ministry mentioned briefly in ch. 3:22. In a sense Jesus and His disciples were now reaping the harvest of

seed sown by John the Baptist. After the resurrection the disciples would reap a bountiful harvest from seed sown during the time of Jesus' ministry (see Acts 2:41, 47; 5:14).

39. *Many of the Samaritans.* This was the first group of converts. During the course of the next two days there was a second harvest (v. 41). During the course of their mission the Seventy visited many of the towns of Samaria, and were given a cordial reception (see DA 488). After the resurrection there was still another harvest (see on v. 38).

The saying of the woman. See on v. 29. Those who knew her must have surmised what was included in her statement about Jesus telling her "all things" she ever did. For such a person as she was, to have such a profound conviction about spiritual things was enough to arrest anyone's attention. John frequently remarks that many "believed" on Jesus (see chs. 7:31; 8:30; 10:42; 11:45; 12:42; see on ch. 1:12).

40. *Two days.* That is, the remainder of this day and all the day following (v. 43; see Vol. I, pp. 181, 182; Vol. V, pp. 248–250). These two days were a joyful time of spiritual seed sowing and harvest.

41. *Many more.* Compare v. 39.

Believed. See on ch. 1:12.

His own word. Those who had not been convinced by the woman's word, no doubt questioning anything she might say, and being perhaps more cautious about accepting anything without first making personal investigation, now believed. Also, some may not have been present to hear the woman's testimony.

42. *Heard him.* They were earwitnesses. No evidence is more convincing than the evidence of personal experience.

This is indeed. The readiness of these Samaritans to believe the evidence that Jesus was the "Prophet" of whom Moses spoke (see on v. 26) stands forth in sharp contrast to the uncertainty with which the Jews received Him (see on ch. 1:10, 11). His life and message constituted convincing evidence to the Samaritans that Moses' prediction had met its fulfillment in the person of Jesus of Nazareth (see on Matt. 1:23; cf. DA 407).

The Christ. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between retaining or omitting these words.

The Saviour. See on Matt. 1:21.

43. *After two days.* [*The Nobleman's Son, John 4:43–54.* See Judean Ministry from First Passover A.D. 28; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] That is, the day after events recorded in vs. 4:5–39 (see on v. 40). The journey of vs. 3–5 is now resumed.

44. *His own country.* That is, Nazareth (see on Mark 6:1, 4; cf. DA 196), not Galilee (see John 4:45). John inserts this comment by way of explaining why Jesus went directly to Cana, some 8 mi. (13 km.) farther north (see on ch. 2:1).

45. *The Galilæans.* See on Matt. 4:13. Note, however, that Matt. 4:13 refers to the formal opening of the Galilean ministry some six months later (see Additional Note on Luke 4).

Having seen. Probably a reference to the incidents of ch. 2:13–23, particularly to the miracles of v. 23. The cleansing of the Temple (ch. 2:13–22) led to the circulation of a report that Jesus had declared Himself the Messiah (see DA 196).

They also went. As all pious Jews did (see on Ex. 23:14–17; Deut. 16:16).

46. *Cana.* See on ch. 2:1.

Made the water wine. See on ch. 2:1–11. Jesus was now among friends, who had already witnessed divine power at work through Him.

Nobleman. Literally, “king’s [man],” that is, a royal official, here probably a courtier of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea. This “nobleman” was a Jew, probably a Herodian (cf. on Mark 3:6). Some have suggested identifying this “nobleman” with Chuza (Luke 8:3) or Manaen (Acts 13:1), officials of Herod who became Christians.

At Capernaum. Christ and the “nobleman” were in Cana, and the son at Capernaum, some 16 mi. (25 km.) distant. Jesus had visited Capernaum approximately one year prior to this time (ch. 2:12), but there is no record of any public work conducted there at that time.

47. When he heard. The rapid spread of the report of Jesus’ return to Galilee testifies to His popularity (see John 4:45; Mark 3:7–12).

Besought him. This is the first recorded instance of a request for healing, though miracles in general have already been mentioned (ch. 2:23).

Come down. See on ch. 2:12.

At the point of death. Human wisdom and skill could do no more, and as a final resort the father made the trip to Cana in the hope of persuading Jesus to return immediately with him to Capernaum (see v. 49). Finding Jesus surrounded by a throng of people, the father arranged for a private interview with Him (see DA 197).

48. Except ye see. According to DA 198, the father had made his acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah (see on v. 45) conditional on the granting of his request, thinking that Jesus would the more readily comply in order to secure a “nobleman” as an adherent. But Jesus detected the note of insincerity in the nobleman’s manner of speech and bearing, and realized that his faith was imperfect. To be sure, he already had a measure of faith, or he would not have come at all. But faith such as his is far from perfect, and Jesus always required unquestioning and unconditional faith *before* divine power could be exercised.

The nobleman planned to *believe* if he could first *see*; Jesus required him to *believe* before he should see. Faith that is conditional upon the granting of certain requests rests on a weak foundation, and will fail under circumstances when God sees best not to grant what is desired. Jesus delayed answering the officer’s request because the nobleman was not ready to receive what he had come to ask for. In his present frame of mind he did not qualify to receive anything from the Lord (see James 1:5–7), and Jesus could do nothing for him until he should realize his utter need and be willing to exercise unquestioning and unconditional faith. Jesus therefore gave him neither Yes nor No for an answer, and the father realized that his request had neither been granted nor denied.

Signs and wonders. That is, miracles (see pp. 208, 209).

Not believe. Or, “not believe at all.” In the Greek the double negative makes the statement most emphatic. The nobleman must have recognized this as a reflection of his own thoughts (see on ch. 1:47–49). The word “ye” is plural. Jesus thought of the Jewish leaders and others whose attitude was similar to that of the nobleman, and classed him with his unbelieving countrymen (see John 2:18; 6:30; 1 Cor. 1:22; see on Matt. 16:1–9). In contrast, the people of Samaria had recently taken Him at His word and received Him heartily, in simple faith (John 4:41, 42). Jesus was grieved that His own countrymen were so slow to believe (see on ch. 1:10, 11). He had a greater gift for the nobleman than the one he had come to ask for, the gift of salvation, and He could not bestow the lesser gift, the healing of the son, without the greater (see p. 209; DA 198).

49. Sir. Gr. *kurios*, “lord” (see on v. 11).

Ere my child die. The needed transformation took place in a moment. Realizing that Jesus read his heart, the father saw that his own motives had been selfish. He saw that his only hope of saving the boy lay in the exercise of unquestioning, unconditional faith, and unhesitatingly surrendered his unbelief and false pride. Here he refers affectionately to his son as a “little child,” a different Greek word from that translated “son” in v. 46.

50. Go thy way. Once the necessary transformation had taken place, there was no delay in the granting of the request, albeit in a way the father had not expected. He had besought Jesus to “come down” to Capernaum, but Jesus told him simply, “Go thy way.” Thus the nobleman was required to depart without evidence that his request had been granted (see on v. 48). His faith was put to the test. He must take the gift, if at all, by faith. He must *act* in faith, believing that he had received what he came to ask for.

Liveth. The Greek expresses the idea that the son not only “lives,” but that he will keep on living.

The man believed. It had been his intention to see before he would believe; now he accepted Jesus at His word. He acted in faith, and as a result peace and joy filled his heart (see DA 198–200). See on ch. 1:12.

51. Going down. The distance was not more than about 16 mi. Cana was cradled in the hills of Galilee, perhaps at an elevation of about 800 ft., whereas Capernaum lay on the shores of the Lake of Galilee, 685 ft. below sea level, nearly 1,500 ft. lower. The journey home would normally have taken four or five hours, and could easily have been made the same afternoon. Anxious as the father had been for the life of his son, his new-found faith grasped the reality of the precious gift he had received, and he made no undue haste to return.

His servants met him. This was the following morning, while the nobleman was still some distance from home.

Thy son liveth. The servants echo the very words Jesus had spoken the day before (v. 50).

52. Began to amend. Literally, “had it better,” or, as we would say, “began to improve.”

The seventh hour. That is, about 1:00 P.M. Compare chs. 1:39; 4:6.

53. The same hour. The cause and effect relationship was evident. Had the healing taken place earlier or later, there might have remained a question as to whether it should be attributed to some other cause than the will and words of Jesus.

Believed. The word is here used in the absolute sense. The father accepted Jesus as the Messiah, or, as we would say, he became a Christian. The results of this miracle were far reaching. The lad was healed, the entire family believed, and the way was prepared for Jesus when, some six months later, He made Capernaum the center of His ministry in Galilee (see on Luke 4:31).

54. The second miracle. See ch. 2:11. For the popular welcome accorded Jesus by the people of Capernaum see on Mark 1:32–37, 45.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–42DA 183–195

2 DA 178

6 PP 204

6, 7 GW 194; 3T 217, 322

7–14MH 27
9 COL 380
9, 10 GW 194
9–12DA 184
10 Ev 267; MH 156; TM 226, 390
10–146T 64; 7T 152
13, 14 GW 194; ML 139
14 AH 308; CE 14; CH 508; ChS 19; CS 27; CT 342, 528; DA 187, 439, 454, 787; Ed 83, 192; Ev 268, 272, 289, 683; EW 209; FE 127; GW 287; MB 20; MH 157, 496; ML 157, 189, 227; MYP 29, 390; PP 204, 412; SL 61; TM 88, 149, 168, 226, 390; 1T 565, 604; 2T 88; 3T 84, 322, 381; 4T 555, 567, 579; 5T 569, 731; 6T 51, 173, 320, 472; 8T 193; 9T 179
14, 15 DA 454
14–18DA 187
19–22DA 188
20 PK 674
21 7T 53
23 CT 259; Ev 377; FE 177; PK 50; 6T 363
23, 24 DA 189; FE 399; 7T 53
24 Ed 75, 175; 8T 247, 263
25–27DA 190
26 DA 194; MH 28
28–30GW 195; MH 102
29 AA 106; MH 28; ML 227; 3T 217; 8T 30
29, 30 DA 191
31, 32 DA 190
34 AA 364; COL 283, 403; DA 190; GW 188; ML 230; MM 20; SC 77; SL 13; 2T 269; 4T 227; WM 53, 116
35 RC 67; Te 258; TM 232; 5T 582; 6T 89, 474; 7T 98; 8T 36; 9T 226; WM 80
35, 36 DA 191; FE 201; MH 103; 5T 86, 187; 6T 23, 416
35–378T 30
36–38GW 409
37, 38 DA 192
39 MH 28; ML 227
39–42AA 19
40–428T 30
41 AA 106
41, 42 RC 67
42 DA 193; SL 83; TM 155
43–54DA 196–200
44, 46 DA 196
47 DA 197
48 DA 198, 315; Ev 594
49, 50 DA 198
51–53DA 199
53 DA 200

CHAPTER 5

1

1 *Jesus on the sabbath day cureth him that was diseased eight and thirty years. 10 The Jews therefore cavil, and persecute him for it. 17 He answereth for himself, and reproveth them, shewing by the testimony of his Father, 32 of John, 36 of his works, 39 and of the scriptures, who he is.*

1. After this. [Second Passover: *The Invalid at Bethesda*, John 5:1–15. See Judean Ministry from First Passover A.D. 28; The Duration of Christ's Ministry; on miracles pp. 208–213.] Literally, “after these [things],” the same phrase used at the beginning of chs. 6 and 7 (see on ch. 6:1).

A feast. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between this and the reading “the feast.”

Since ancient times commentators have been divided regarding the identity of this feast. The opinion of the Church Fathers is divided between Passover and Pentecost, and indeed one 9th-century gospel manuscript at Oxford goes so far as to insert “feast of unleavened bread” instead of “feast of the Jews,” thus identifying the feast as the Passover. Another, later manuscript, however, shows a different attempt at identification by inserting after the word “Jews” the words “the Tabernacles.” In modern times some commentators have championed the Feast of Dedication as the one here mentioned, and many others have held that this feast is to be identified as Purim. Thus almost every feast of the Jewish religious year has had its champion.

Although it must be admitted that no final answer can be given to this problem, there are certain evidences that may be taken into consideration in arriving at a tentative conclusion. In the previous chapter (ch. 4:35) Jesus declared that four months remained until the harvest. As the grain harvest in Palestine occurred in April and May, the events of ch. 4 would seem to have occurred in December or January. At this very time the Feast of Dedication (also known as Hanukkah) was celebrated in all the synagogues throughout Palestine. It is doubtful, however, that this was the feast referred to here, not only because it was not one of the feasts that the Jews regularly went to Jerusalem to celebrate (see Ex. 23:14; Deut. 16:16), but also because it occurred in the winter (see John 10:22), a time when the sick would scarcely have been on the porches surrounding the Pool of Bethesda. The next feast was Purim, which occurred in the middle of the last month of the Jewish year, near the first of March. Although by this time the weather would have been milder, it is still doubtful that Purim is the feast in view here, because, like the Feast of Dedication, it was not one of the great feasts for which the Jews generally journeyed to Jerusalem.

The three other feasts with which the feast of ch. 5:1 has been identified, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, were all celebrated at Jerusalem and were in periods of generally clement weather. Of these three, it would seem that the Passover has the strongest evidence in its favor as the one under consideration in the present passage. It was so identified as early as the 2d century by Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* ii. 22. 3, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 391). The same expression, “a feast of the Jews,” is used

¹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Jn 3:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

for the Passover in ch. 6:4; and the feast of ch. 5:1 is the first feast following ch. 4:35 to which Jesus, like the Jews in general, would have gone “up to Jerusalem.” See pp. 192, 193; *The Duration of Christ’s Ministry*; see on Matt. 20:17.

This miracle and the arraignment of Jesus before the Sanhedrin that resulted (see on vs. 16–18) mark the close of the Judean ministry. It was now probably the Passover of A.D. 29 (see p. 192; *The Duration of Christ’s Ministry*; see Additional Note on Luke 4), a year after the First Cleansing of the Temple (see on John 2:13). The Judean ministry thus occupied about one year, having been interrupted temporarily by the withdrawal to Galilee mentioned in ch. 4:1–3.

Up to Jerusalem. See on Matt. 20:17.

2. Sheep market. Gr. *probatikē*, an adjective referring to something having to do with sheep. Interpreters differ as to whether it should be understood here as meaning “sheep market,” “sheep pool,” or “sheep gate,” all of which are possible interpretations. In favor of taking the words “sheep” and “pool” together and reading, “Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep pool [a place] called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda,” is the fact that all Christian writers until the 13th century who consider the passage understand it this way. On the other hand, if “sheep” and “pool” are not taken together, and “sheep” is understood to be an abbreviated name for a certain locality in Jerusalem, the “sheep gate” (Neh. 3:1; 12:39) seems to be a probable identification.

Pool. Although there is still some discussion as to the location of this pool, its generally accepted identification with a double pool at the Church of St. Anne, just north of the present Via Dolorosa, is valid. Origen, in the 3d century, described this pool as being surrounded by four porticoes with a fifth bisecting it, which corresponds with the record of John. As it exists today, it is 55 by 12 ft. (16.7 by 3.6 m.) and lies many feet below the surface of the ground, for the ground level is now higher than in ancient times. It is covered by five arches, which support the floor of the ancient Christian church that was subsequently built above it.

Bethesda. The name of this place appears variously in the manuscripts as *Bēthesda*, *Bēthzatha*, *Belzetha*, and *Bēthsaida*, and the textual evidence for each of these readings is not without importance. Although a final decision on this question cannot be made, it seems probable that the original reading was *Bēthzatha*, or something similar, inasmuch as the northeastern section of the city, in which this pool appears to have been situated (see above under “Pool”), was named Bezetha (see Josephus *War* ii. 19. 4 [530]; 4. 2 [151]), which could easily be a variant of *Bēthzatha*.

The name Bethesda appears to be from the Aramaic (here called “Hebrew,” as elsewhere in John; see chs. 19:13, 17; 20:16) *beth chesda*, “house of mercy.” It may have been introduced into later manuscripts because it was a fitting name for a place where Jesus healed the sick. However, inasmuch as John makes no attempt to interpret the meaning here, he obviously did not intend to make a point of the meaning of the word, and modern interpreters will do well to follow his example by refraining from allegorizing the name.

Five porches. See above under “Pool.”

3. Waiting for the moving. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for omitting the words “waiting for the moving of the water,” and the whole of v. 4. Thus the

story of an angel's bestowing supernatural healing powers upon the water of the pool appears not to have been part of the original gospel text, but was probably added in an attempt to explain v. 7. However, that this legend was based on an early tradition is indicated by the fact that Tertullian knew of it at the beginning of the 3d century. There is no evidence for this insertion prior to his time. In view of v. 7 this passage evidently preserves what was a popular opinion regarding the waters of the pool (see DA 201).

The rippling of the water was real (DA 202), but there is evidence implicit in the account of the legend that this popular belief had no further basis in fact. The stronger trampled upon the weak in their anxiety to reach the waters when they were agitated, and many died on the brink of the pool (see DA 201, 202, 206). Thus, the more selfish, determined, and strong a man might be, the more likely he was to reach the pool first and be healed. The most needy were least likely to benefit, whereas Jesus chose the worst case. The first to reach the pool each time the waters were agitated, apparently was healed, whereas the gifts of God are for all alike who qualify to receive them. Also, healing took place only periodically. The principles implicit in this record of those "healed" at the pool seem strangely different from those principles by which Jesus performed His miracles (see pp. 208, 209).

5. *Thirty and eight years.* This statement is an important testimony to the truly miraculous nature of Jesus' healing, for it precludes any possibility that the man could have been suffering from a temporary disability. For similar statements regarding other miracles see Luke 13:1; Acts 4:22. This invalid sat alone and friendless, a hopeless, paralyzed cripple (see DA 202, 203). His case was the worst of those assembled on the brink of the pool (see DA 206).

6. *Wilt thou?* Too great emphasis on the function of the will implied in this question should be avoided, for the Greek conveys the simple sense, "Do you wish to be healed?" Jesus' question was rhetorical, for it was obvious that the man desired release from his disease, but it served to turn the sufferer's attention immediately to Jesus and to the problem of healing from his affliction.

7. *I have no man.* The pathetic reply of the afflicted man lays bare a story of physical misery, of desertion by friends, and of the repeated revival of hope, followed each time by bitter disappointment. At this point in the narrative his hope was still centered on the supposedly miraculous pool. Apparently it had not yet occurred to him that Jesus could heal him by other means.

8. *Rise.* Jesus' words here are strikingly similar to those in Mark 2:11. Their terseness and directness must have inspired confidence in the sick man (see DA 202, 203). Jesus apparently made no attempt to refute the superstition regarding the pool, nor did He question the causes of the man's disease. Rather, by a positive approach He enjoined the man to demonstrate his faith. For the requirements Jesus made of those whom He would heal see p. 209.

Bed. A pallet that might easily be rolled up and carried on the shoulder.

9. *Immediately.* John uses this word much less frequently than Mark (see on Mark 1:10), and here it is in striking contrast with the "thirty and eight years" during which the man had been ill.

Walked. The form of the word employed here, in the Greek implies, not merely one act of walking, but a new facility that the man continued to possess. Physically he now entered upon a new way of life.

The sabbath. This is the first of seven recorded Sabbath miracles (see miracles 3, 5, 6, 9, 27–29, listed on pp. 210–213). Now for the first time Jesus openly challenged the rabbinical Sabbath regulations (see on Mark 1:22; 2:23–28; 7:6–13). That He did so when the city was filled with visitors for the feast, and that He dramatized His rejection of such traditions by performing a miracle and publicizing it by having the man carry his bed, demonstrate the importance He attached to the question. See on John 5:10, 16.

10. Not lawful. See on Mark 2:24. The Jews seemed to be concerned, not that the man was healed on the Sabbath, but that he was carrying a burden, his bed, on that day. Jewish traditional law provided strict regulations in regard to the carrying of burdens on the Sabbath. Thus the Mishnah lists 39 types of work that cannot be performed on Sabbath, the last one of which is “carrying out from one domain to another” (Mishnah *Shabbath* 7, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 349). Another Mishnaic passage declares that if a man carries into the public domain “a living person in a bed, he is not culpable even in respect of the bed, because the bed is subsidiary to him” (Mishnah *Shabbath* 10, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 448), which seems to imply that carrying an empty couch would be considered a transgression.

11. He that made. The erstwhile invalid apparently made no attempt to justify his action in terms of Jewish law, but appealed, instead, to the higher authority that his experience had shown him Jesus possessed.

12. What man? Those who asked this question knew well enough that none but Jesus could have performed the miracle, but were probably seeking direct evidence by which they could make Him out to be a violator of their Sabbath regulations. As later events prove (vs. 16–47), they felt that they had a clear case against Him.

13. Conveyed himself away. Gr. *ekneuo*, “to slip out,” “to slip away.” Jesus’ purpose in performing this miracle was not to involve Himself in debate with the Jews, but by a concrete, striking act to demonstrate the nature of true Sabbath-keeping and to show the falsity of the traditional restrictions with which the Pharisees sought to bind their nation.

A multitude. Jerusalem was especially crowded during the great feasts (see v. 1), and doubtless this miracle was performed in the presence of many who would carry the report of it far beyond the borders of Judea. It is noteworthy that Jesus required no confession of faith from the infirm man before healing him. Obviously, however, his faith rose to the call of the occasion.

14. Jesus findeth him. Apparently Jesus sought out the man, for the spiritual impact of the healing had not yet been brought to bear upon him. Although the larger purpose of the miracle seems to have been to show the Jews the meaninglessness of their traditions (see on v. 10), Jesus did not neglect the salvation of the one whom He had made whole.

Temple. Gr. *hieron*, a word that refers to the whole Temple complex rather than to the sanctuary proper (see on Matt. 4:5). Jesus probably found the man in one of the courtyards of the Temple.

Sin no more. Or, “do not go on sinning.” Jesus directed the man’s mind from his physical well-being to his need of spiritual hygiene. His response at Bethesda to Jesus’ injunction, “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk,” had been one of faith, the beginning of spiritual as well as physical health. Now Jesus’ further admonition, “Sin no more,” implied both that his former life had been one of sin (see DA 202) and that those sins

were forgiven. The intimate relationship between physical healing and forgiveness of sins was demonstrated in the healing of the palsied man (Mark 2:5–12).

Worse thing. This might be understood as a relapse into even more severe illness than the man had previously experienced, perhaps an acute sickness in place of the chronic infirmity he had so long suffered. It should not be concluded from this passage, however, that sickness constitutes divine punishment for an iniquitous life on the part of the one smitten, or that illness necessarily follows a life of sin. The story of Job and the words of Jesus in regard to the blind man (ch. 9:2, 3) clearly indicate the danger in assuming such a connection. See on Job 42:5; Ps. 38:3; 39:9.

15. Told the Jews. Apparently the man identified his Benefactor to the Jews because he sought to soften their condemnation of himself by cooperating in answering their question (see vs. 10–13), and also because he now desired to publish the knowledge of the One who had healed him.

16. Persecute Jesus. Jesus was haled before the Sanhedrin and charged with Sabbathbreaking (see DA 204), and to this charge was added that of blasphemy (v. 18). The leaders of the nation sought to counteract Jesus' undeniably great influence over the people (see on ch. 2:23). Also, they set spies to watch Him, apparently to build up a case, so that they could condemn Him to death (see DA 213).

By their action in publicly censuring Jesus in the spring of A.D. 29 the Jewish leaders sought to undermine His authority and influence with the people (DA 213). They made a public proclamation warning the nation against Him and set spies to follow Him in an endeavor to find cause for legal action against Him. In the full knowledge that their opposition to Him was without excuse they became even more bitter toward Him from now on, and began laying plans how they might take His life. This design they succeeded in carrying out two years later, at the Passover of A.D. 31.

By the spring of A.D. 29 they had ample evidence of his Messiahship—they knew of the vision of Zacharias (Luke 1:5–20), of the announcement to the shepherds (Luke 2:8–12), of the coming of the wise men (Matt. 2:1, 2), of the visit of Jesus to the Temple at the age of 12 (Luke 2:42–50), of the witness of John the Baptist to Christ as the Messiah (John 1:19–34). More recently they had had the additional evidence of the perfection evident in Jesus' character, of the soundness of His teachings, and of the divine character of His miracles. Added to all of this they had the prophecies. These, the Jews must have been impressed were being fulfilled in events then taking place.

On the sabbath day. The Jews seem not to have punished the man for carrying his bed on the Sabbath, beyond censuring him publicly. But Jesus, the author of the miracle, they sought to slay, probably both because He had healed the man and because He had commanded him to carry his bed on the Sabbath (see on chs. 7:22–24; 9:6, 14). While it was allowed by Jewish law to treat a man who was acutely sick, the treating of a chronic case such as this was forbidden. Thus an ancient Jewish commentary, written many centuries after Jesus' time, but which undoubtedly reflects the situation in His day, declares: "Is a person allowed to heal on the Sabbath? Our masters have taught: Mortal danger overrides the Sabbath; but if it is doubtful whether he [a sick man] will regain health or not, one should not override the Sabbath [on his account]" (Tanchuma B, cited in Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* vol. 1, p. 624). Jesus' choice in the present instance of a man who had been ill for 38 years seems to have been made purposely to demonstrate the fallacy of such Jewish legal restrictions.

17. *Worketh hitherto.* Literally, “is working until now.” By these words Jesus assured His hearers that God, who had created the world, was still actively working in their midst, even on the Sabbath day (see EGW Supplementary Material on Acts 17:28). This was a contradiction of the deistic view in some circles of Judaism that tended to make God so distant from the world that He had little contact with it. Even more than this, Jesus’ words were an assertion that His own works as revealed in the miracle of healing He had just performed were indeed a work of God. The thought here expressed is basic to Jesus’ discourse in John 5:19–47.

And I. Or, “I also.” The emphatic use of the pronoun with the coordinate conjunction implies Jesus’ equality with God.

18. *His Father.* Literally, “His own Father.” To speak of God as “Father” was not entirely foreign to Jewish usage. Occasionally in intertestamental Jewish literature (see pp. 84–86) God is called the Father of the Jews (see Jubilees 1:24, 25, 28; Tobit 13:4). A few times in prayers He is called “my Father” (see Ecclesiasticus 23:1, 4; Wisdom 14:3). It was not for such an expression that the Jews now accused Jesus of blasphemy. Undoubtedly realizing that they had no reply to His defense for healing on the Sabbath (see on John 5:17), they turned to challenge His claim to equality with God, which they recognized as implicit in His declaration: “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” John makes clear the distinction in the minds of the Jews between speaking of God as one’s Father and Jesus’ implied claim that God was His own Father in a special sense.

Equal with God. See Phil. 2:6; see on John 1:1. The recognition here that the Father-Son relationship between God and Christ is one of equality is highly significant. The argument has sometimes been advanced that Jesus was the Son of God only in the same sense that all men are sons of God, that is, by virtue of creation and spiritual fatherhood. It has been pointed out that the term “son of God” frequently was used in the Graeco-Roman world as a title for emperors, indicating that they were demigods, but not necessarily that they possessed complete deity. Nevertheless John’s record shows that the Jews clearly understood Jesus’ words to be a declaration of equality with the Most High.

19. *The Son.* Although Jesus frequently referred to Himself as the Son of man, a title that emphasized His humanity and probably implied His Messiahship (see on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10), in the present context the unqualified title “the Son” clearly means “the Son of God.” This is evident both from the fact that He uses it in connection with the Father, and from His reference to the Son of God in John 5:25. It is significant that when the Jews accused Jesus of claiming deity, He went on to explain and amplify that claim rather than to minimize it in any way. See Additional Note on Chapter 1.

Of himself. Literally, “from himself,” that is, by His own accord, on His own initiative.

Seeth the Father do. Literally, “sees the Father doing.” Jesus’ deeds were in complete harmony with the way in which God treats man. More than this, they were God’s supreme expression of His loving concern for man. That Jesus could so completely express the character of the Father was possible only because the Son gave entire obedience to the Father’s will.

20. *Loveth the Son.* See ch. 3:35.

All things. Here Jesus asserts His perfect comprehension of the Father’s will. Only one who was God Himself could honestly make such an assertion.

Greater works. That is, greater than the miracles of healing that Jesus had been performing (see on v. 21). The strength of Jesus' declaration is the more remarkable in that He made it in the face of condemnation for the miracle He had just performed.

21. As the Father. The comparison is in itself an implication of the equality of the Son with the Father. The Jews believed rightly that resurrecting the dead was a divine prerogative; in claiming the same power Jesus asserted His deity.

The Son quickeneth. Undoubtedly this applies both to Jesus' power to raise the dead "at the last trump" (1 Cor. 15:52) and to His power to give new life to every Christian experiencing the new birth (see ch. 3:3). Not until much later does Jewish literature indicate that the resurrection was considered to be a work of the Messiah; in the present discourse, however, Jesus was not emphasizing His Messiahship, but rather His deity.

22. Father judgeth. The Father has given into the hands of the Son the successful accomplishment of the work of redemption. The Father has not become man, He has not given His life to save man; but the Son, who did become man and gave His life for the human race, is the rightful One to judge those who have rejected Him. He alone knows the full power of temptation, He alone has borne the sins of the world. See on John 5:27, 29; Heb. 4:15.

23. Should honour. In its immediate setting, Jesus' words admonished His hearers, who professed to honor God, that for this very reason they should honor also the Son. It is impossible, in fact, to honor God without honoring the Son, whom He has sent.

24. Verily. See on Matt. 5:18; John 1:51.

He that heareth. This verse is significant for the close connection it demonstrates between hearing and believing. In fact, the two acts are expressed in Greek by participles that share a common article, implying that hearing is not significant unless one also believes. See on Matt. 7:24. Here Jesus further emphasizes His submission to the Father, for the Son's message ("my word") is intended to bring men to believe on the Father and to put their trust in Him.

Hath everlasting life. This declaration is more than a promise of eternal life to come; it is an assurance that the believer now and here may begin to enjoy life that is eternal in quality, because he is united spiritually with His Lord, whose life He shares. "The Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal" (DA 388). See John 6:47; 1 John 5:11, 12; see on John 3:16.

Not come into condemnation. See John 3:18; Rom. 8:1.

Is passed. Literally, "has passed." The passage from death to life is not only a bodily transformation at the future resurrection but also an experience through which every true Christian has already passed and the fruits of which he continues to enjoy. Spiritually, the crucial change from death to life comes when a man is born again (see Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13; 3:1; see on John 1:13; 3:5).

25. Verily. See on Matt. 5:18; John 1:51.

Is coming, and now is. While the phrase "is coming" clearly applies to the literal resurrection in the future (see v. 28), the words "now is" seem to point to the experience to which Jesus had just referred, when the Christian "is passed from death unto life" (v. 24). Thus they are a reminder that a spiritual resurrection is immediately available to anyone who, though spiritually dead, will yet "hear the voice of the Son of God." See the similar use of these phrases in ch. 4:21, 23.

It is also true that the present verse appears to speak of only a partial resurrection, whereas v. 28 distinctly declares that in the future resurrection “all that are in the graves shall hear his voice.” So understood, v. 25 may be seen as referring to the special resurrection of many “saints which slept,” but arose at the resurrection of Christ as the first fruits of His victory (see Matt. 27:52, 53).

26. As ... so. See on v. 21.

Given to the Son. See on ch. 6:37.

Life in himself. “In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived” (DA 530). Yet as the incarnate Son who had “emptied himself” (Phil. 2:7, RSV) of the exercise of His divine prerogatives, Christ, speaking of His existence on earth as a man among men, could refer to His possession of life as a gift from God. “The divinity of Christ is the believer’s assurance of eternal life” (DA 530). See Additional Note on Chapter 1.

27. Authority. In commissioning the Son to carry out the plan of redemption for the saving of man and the glory of God, the Father has also committed to Him the execution of judgment. That this should be so is reasonable, for the Son of God, a divine being, is also the Son of man, a human being, who has resisted temptation (Heb. 4:15), borne sin vicariously, and tasted death. Yet He is triumphant in the great controversy with Satan. No other being in the universe is thus qualified to pass eternal judgment upon men, and no other being can glorify and vindicate God by that judgment. See on v. 22.

28. Hour is coming. See on v. 25.

All. This is a general reference to the resurrection of the dead at the end of the world, without making a distinction between the first and second resurrections (see Rev. 20:5, 6). Jewish thinking in Jesus’ day was divided over the question of the resurrection. The Sadducees denied that the dead would arise at all, while the Pharisees strongly maintained that they would. Even among those Jews who held the doctrine of the resurrection, a division apparently also existed over the question of who would be included in it, some holding that only the righteous would arise, others maintaining that both the righteous and the wicked would come forth from their graves. In line with this latter view, a document from the late 2d and the early 1st century B.C. represents the patriarchs as declaring: “Then shall we also rise, each one over our tribe, worshipping the King of heaven. Then also all men shall rise, some unto glory and some unto shame” (*The Testament of Benjamin* 10:7, 8, in R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, p. 359). Jesus, in accordance with His usual practice, did not enter into dispute over the various views held by the Jews regarding the resurrection, but simply stated the truth that “all that are in the graves ... shall come forth.”

29. They that have done good. It is not to be inferred from these words that salvation is earned by “doing good.” Good and evil deeds are like a reflection of a man’s spiritual condition. Trees may be judged good or bad on the basis of their fruit, and consequently worthy of cultivation or destruction, although the intrinsic goodness or badness of a tree does not reside in its fruit. Similarly, men may be classified in terms of their works, although their works are but the outward signs of their inner spiritual condition, which is the determining factor in their salvation.

Resurrection of life. That is, a resurrection that is characterized by, or results in, eternal life; a resurrection, indeed, that is life itself in that it is effected by the life of Christ in which the believer shares. “Christ became one flesh with us, in order that we might become one spirit with Him. It is by virtue of this union that we are to come forth

from the grave—not merely as a manifestation of the power of Christ, but because, through faith, His life has become ours” (DA 388).

Damnation. Gr. *krisis*, “judgment.” The contrast of this word with “life” indicates that it is to be understood here in the sense of “adverse judgment.” This is the same word translated “condemnation” in v. 24 and “judgment” in v. 22; all of which seems to indicate that the judgment referred to there as being committed to Christ is primarily the judgment of the wicked. See on ch. 9:39.

30. Do nothing. See v. 19; ch. 6:38.

As I hear. That is, from the Father.

Judgment. Gr. *krisis*, see on v. 29. In view of the, the context, Jesus’ words here are an assertion of the justice of His condemnation of sinners in the final judgment. See on vs. 22, 27.

Father. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of this word.

31. Witness of myself. In regard to legal testimony as to certain phases, at least, of one’s personal life, the Mishnah declares: “No one may testify concerning himself” (Mishnah *Kethuboth* 2. 9, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 151). Jesus’ statement in the present verse probably was intended to appeal to this type of thinking among His Jewish hearers. At first sight ch. 8:14 appears to be a contradiction of His declaration here. In each case, however, Jesus’ words were framed to meet the thinking of His hearers. In ch. 8:14 the discussion was not in regard to His relation to the Father, but rather to His declaration, “I am the light of the world,” which the Pharisees rejected because He said it of Himself. To this objection Jesus insisted nevertheless that His words were true. In the present passage, however, the setting is different: here Jesus sought to demonstrate His dependence upon His Father by pointing to the works that He was empowered to perform as an evidence of His claims (ch. 5:36, 37). To enforce His point, He seems to have reminded His hearers of the Jewish principle that testimony regarding one’s own conduct was not considered valid.

32. Another. Since ancient times commentators have understood this verse in two different ways. Some have taken the word “another” to refer to John the Baptist, in view of the immediate context (vs. 33–35), and doubtless Jesus’ hearers at the time understood Him that way (see on v. 34). Thus, recognizing that His own authority was not accepted (v. 31), Jesus developed His argument by an appeal to four different witnesses: (1) to the witness of John (vs. 32–35); (2) to the miracles (v. 36), which the Jews could not ignore; (3) to the witness of the Father (v. 37); and (4) to the Scriptures (v. 39) and particularly to the writings of Moses (vs. 45–47), whom the Jews acknowledged as their pre-eminent authority.

Many other interpreters, while not denying this fourfold development of Jesus’ argument, have understood the present verse to apply rather to the Father, in anticipation of v. 37. They have pointed out that v. 32 is in the present tense, a fitting expression of the Father’s continuing witness to His Son, whereas vs. 33–35, which clearly apply to John, are in the past, as his ministry had by this time come to an end.

33. Ye sent. This is probably a reference to the incident recorded in ch. 1:19–27.

34. Testimony from man. When Jesus declared that there was another who bore witness of Him (v. 32), undoubtedly many of the Jews immediately thought that He referred to John the Baptist (see ch. 1:7, 8, 15–18, 26, 27, 29–36). Jesus went on to point

out that John indeed had borne witness to the truth, but that the validity of His own claims did not stand or fall by such human testimony.

That ye might be saved. Although recognizing that the truth of His words did not depend upon John's having testified to them, nevertheless Jesus reminded the Jews that John had witnessed to Him, for large numbers of the people believed John (see Matt. 21:26). By appealing to such testimony, Jesus could encourage some to believe in Him, and thus He could save them.

35. Light. Gr. *luchnos*, "a lamp" (see on ch. 1:9). The apostle John declares concerning the Baptist that "he was not that Light" (v. 8). Rather, John the Baptist was a lamp as compared with Christ, who was "the true Light" (v. 9). As a lamp is no longer needed when the light of day has come, so the work of John was superseded by that of Jesus.

The word translated "burning" is a form of the verb *kaiō*, "to be set on fire," and thus may imply that John was but a secondary luminary, having himself been "set on fire" by the greater Light.

Ye were willing. In regard to John's popularity see Matt. 3:5-7; 21:26.

For a season. At the time of the present discourse the public ministry of John had already come to an end, and he apparently was in prison (see on Luke 3:19, 20).

36. That of John. In view of the context in v. 34 it seems clear that Jesus means here that He has greater witness than any that John gave to Him.

Works. These include not only Jesus' miracles but all of His ministry for men: His sinless life, His teaching, His acts of mercy, His death, and His resurrection. Taken together, these works constitute a testimony to the truth of His claims, one that no human declaration can approach in importance. "The highest evidence that He came from God is that His life revealed the character of God" (DA 407).

37. The Father. The supreme witness to the truth that is in Christ is to be found neither in human testimony nor in the works of Jesus, but in the voice of God speaking to the human heart. When the Christian knows in his own heart that "the Father himself ... hath borne witness of" Christ, he is possessed of a certainty that transcends all other assurances. Perhaps Jesus thought also of the voice from heaven at His own baptism (see on Matt. 3:17).

Ye have neither. Jesus' hearers had heard the testimony of John, and they had seen Jesus' works, but of the third kind of testimony, the witness of the Father revealed to the heart, they knew nothing, for, as Jesus told them, "whom he hath sent, him ye believe not" (v. 38). Although hearing human testimony and observing the deeds of Jesus may come before faith, the supreme proof of the Messiahship and deity of Jesus Christ can be had only after faith has begun to grow in the heart. Only by the ear and the eye of faith can the Father be heard and seen and can the word He speaks about Jesus Christ abide in man and be apprehended by him. But when this word does abide and is apprehended, there is no greater certainty.

39. Search the scriptures. This passage may be translated either as a simple statement, "Ye search the scriptures," or as a command, "Search the scriptures!" The context seems to indicate that these words are best understood as a plain declaration of Christ to the Jews, "Ye search the scriptures because ye think to have eternal life in them, and they are the witnesses about me!" It was ancient Jewish thought that a knowledge of the law would itself assure a man of eternal life. Thus Hillel, a rabbi of the 1st century

B.C., is reported to have declared: “One who has acquired unto himself words of Torah, has acquired for himself the life of the world to come” (Mishnah *Aboth* 2. 7, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 17). Jesus here makes use of this belief to remind the Jews that the Scriptures in which they thought to find eternal life were the very writings that testified of Him (see PP 367). This passage has also been used effectively as an injunction to study the Scriptures (see 2 T 121). Had the Jews searched the Scriptures with eyes of faith, they would have been prepared to recognize the Messiah when He stood among them.

A passage almost identical with this verse appears in an apocryphal gospel discovered in Egypt on a papyrus written at the latest by A.D. 150. It reads, “Turning to the rulers of the people, he said this word, ‘Ye search the scriptures; [those scriptures] in which ye think to have life, they are those that witness concerning me’” (*Egerton Papyrus* 2, lines 5–10; Greek text in H. Idris Bell and T. C. Skeat, *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel* [London, 1935], pp. 8, 9). Such a passage appears to have been based upon the Gospel of John, and consequently is an important witness to the existence of that Gospel during the first half of the 2d century. The fact that apocryphal gospel papyrus was discovered in Egypt indicates that the Gospel of John apparently had circulated there—at a considerable distance from Ephesus, its probable place of origin—for some time before it was used in the construction of an apocryphal account of Christ. This, together with the contemporary Rylands Papyrus of John, is significant evidence for the validity of the traditional dating of the Fourth Gospel near the end of the 1st century A.D. (see pp. 179–181).

40. Come to me. In two later discourses Jesus showed clearly that coming to Him results in eternal life, and that to “come” to Him is synonymous with believing in Him (chs. 6:35; 7:37, 38). Although the Jews repeatedly came to Him to hear and question Him, they did not come in faith or with a sense of their own need of His power to save.

That ye might have life. See on chs. 3:16; 10:10.

41. Honour from men. The ultimate success of Jesus’ work did not depend upon whether the Jewish leaders of His day recognized Him as the Messiah. The purposes of His message and His ministry transcended any approbation that human beings could give. His ultimate aim was the conquest of the kingdom of evil for the glory of God.

42. Love of God. That is, men’s love for God, not the love of God for them. God loved the Pharisees, but all too often they failed to reciprocate (see 1 John 4:10, 11, 19).

43. Ye receive me not. See ch. 1:5, 10, 11.

If another shall come. Some commentators have understood this as a direct historical allusion to Bar Cocheba, the Jewish insurgent leader who was hailed as the Messiah during the Second Revolt, A.D. 132–135 (see p. 79). Rejecting the possibility of an actual prophetic forecast, they have advanced their interpretation of this verse as an indication that the Gospel of John could not have been written before the Second Revolt. Such an interpretation is to be rejected on two counts: (1) The evidence is clear that John was written before that time (see on v. 39; see also pp. 179, 181); (2) Jesus’ statement is in no way a declaration that someone would come claiming in his own name to be the Messiah, but rather a hypothetical statement that if anyone did, the Jews would be willing to receive him. At the same time, it is true that Bar Cocheba was accepted as the Messiah, even by the Jewish leader Akiba, and in this way the truth of Jesus’ proposition was demonstrated.

44. Honour. Literally, “glory,” “good reputation.” Many of the Jews judged themselves by themselves; they considered a man’s reputation as good or bad in terms of their own traditions, instead of looking to God and His character as their standard. Consequently they were unable to believe in Christ.

From God only. Better, “from the only God.” The fact that God is one and absolute means that there is only one true standard for the judgment of character—the character of God Himself as revealed in His law. The principle of the uniqueness of God was a prime tenet of Jewish faith, but the Jews denied it by their actions to the extent that they judged their fellow men by traditional human standards.

45. Even Moses. For the Jews the Law of Moses was the basis of religion, and indeed, of life as a whole. Now Jesus points His hearers to the startling fact that if they had rightly understood that Law, they would have seen Him revealed in it. Thus they stood condemned by their greatest prophet.

In a manuscript of an apocryphal gospel from the 2d century A.D., a passage appears much like this verse. It reads: “Do not think that I come to accuse you before my Father; your accuser is Moses, in whom you have put your hope” (*Egerton Papyrus* 2 [see on John 5:39], lines 10–14). For the significance of this and other passages from this document that parallel John see on v. 39.

Trust. Gr. *elpizō*, “to hope.” The Jews placed their hope for eternal life in a conformity to the Law of Moses as traditionally interpreted (see on v. 39).

46. He wrote of me. This is apparently not a reference to any particular passage in the writings of Moses, unless it be Deut. 18:15, 18 (see comment there), but rather a general allusion to the elements of the Pentateuch that pointed to Christ, particularly to the sanctuary service and to the prophecies of Jacob (Gen. 49:10) and to Balaam (Num. 24:17). If the Jews had rightly understood these, they would have been prepared to accept Christ when He came. Instead, they saw the precepts of Moses only as the basis of a legalistic way of life; consequently, they failed to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, and thus placed themselves under the condemnation of the very writings by which they thought they were living.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1–5MH 81
- 1–47DA 201–213
- 2 DA 201
- 5–9DA 202; SC 50
- 6 DA 203
- 6, 7 MH 83
- 8 MH 84
- 10 DA 203
- 11, 12 DA 204
- 14 CT 466; DA 204, 824; MH 113; ML 154
- 15, 16 DA 204
- 17 AH 287; DA 206; LS 80; PP 114; 6T 187; 8T 261
- 17–208T 268
- 18 DA 207
- 19 CT 410; DA 208, 209; FE 268; SC 75
- 20–238T 269

21 DA 209
 22 MB 125; 9T 185
 24 COL 38
 25 DA 209
 28, 29 GC 544
 29 GC 482
 30 COL 60; CT 410; DA 180, 336, 675; GW 57; FE 347; 3T 107; 8T 334
 35 FE 366
 38 DA 212
 39 COL 39, 111, 128; CSW 17–23, 29, 53, 84, 112; Ev 69, 434; EW 58, 221, 223; FE 164, 182, 309, 382, 391, 404; GC 69; LS 293; ML 28, 73, 97; MYP 257, 259; PP 367; SC 88; 2T 121, 343, 634, 692; 3T 81, 449; 4T 312, 499; 5T 273, 388, 575, 717; 8T 157
 40 AA 27; CG 467; CH 211; GC 22; 1T 505; 2T 296, 409; 5T 221, 430
 40, 41, 43 DA 212
 43 5T 398
 46 COL 128
 46, 47 DA 213

CHAPTER 6

1 *Christ feedeth five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes. 15 Thereupon the people would have made him king. 16 But withdrawing himself, he walked on the sea to his disciples: 26 reproveth the people flocking after him, and all the fleshly hearers of his word: 32 declareth himself to be the bread of life to believers. 66 Many disciples depart from him. 68 Peter confesseth him. 70 Judas is a devil.*

1. After these things. [*Feeding the Five Thousand, John 6:1–14=Matt. 14:13–21=Mark 6:30–44=Luke 9:10–17.* Major comment: Mark and John. See Closing Galilean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] In the Fourth Gospel this expression generally indicates that some considerable period of time had elapsed since the events previously narrated, and does not necessarily mean that the incident about to be reported occurred immediately after those preceding it (cf. chs. 5:1; 7:1; for the significance of a similar expression, in the singular, see on ch. 2:12). The events of ch. 6 occurred nearly a year after those of ch. 5, if the unnamed feast of ch. 5:1 was a Passover (see pp. 193, 247; see on ch. 5:1). In fact, John here passes over the entire period of Jesus' public ministry in Galilee in silence. According to the chronology adopted by this commentary ch. 6 is dated about Passover time (see v. 4) of A.D. 30.

The events of this chapter are the only ones within the period of Jesus' Galilean ministry of which John takes note (see pp. 197, 198). The question may be raised as to why, in composing his narrative of seemingly unrelated incidents in Jesus' life, John should have chosen to relate the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. It may be observed, first, that of the four Passovers of Jesus' ministry, this is the only one He did not celebrate at Jerusalem. John, indeed, takes careful note of these feasts and mentions Jesus' attendance at each of the others (see chs. 2:13; 5:1; 12:1, 12). Perhaps, in part at least, he intended the narrative of ch. 6 to mark this Passover season and to explain why Jesus did not go up to Jerusalem. Even more important, the events of ch. 6 explain how the people of Galilee, once so eager to follow Jesus (see on Mark 1:44, 45; 3:7–12; John 4:45), now turned against Him (see on John 6:66) as, the year before, the leaders in Jerusalem had turned against Him (see on ch. 5:1). As the one incident had brought His

Judean ministry to a close, so the events of ch. 6 mark the close of His public ministry in Galilee (see on Matt. 15:21).

The Gospel of John gives special attention to evidence that Jesus was indeed the Messiah (see p. 892), and to the Jews' believing or disbelieving this evidence (see on John 1:12). Accordingly, it would seem, John traces the major steps by which the nation turned against Christ and eventually rejected Him. This objective would fully justify the selection of the events of ch. 6. Perhaps, also, John felt that the Synoptic Gospels had already covered the period of the Galilean ministry in sufficient detail.

Over the sea. That is, from Capernaum to the vicinity of Bethsaida Julias (see Luke 9:10; cf. on Mark 6:33), at the northern end of the lake. At the close of ch. 5 Jesus was still in Judea. Now He is said to have gone over "the sea of Tiberias," which implies that between the events of chs. 5 and 6 He had returned to Galilee. For the circumstances and purpose of this journey see on Mark 6:30.

Tiberias. John is the only Biblical writer who refers to the Lake of Galilee as the Sea of Tiberias (see also ch. 21:1). This may reflect the fact that he wrote his Gospel, probably, several decades after the others, and the name Tiberias, as applied to the lake, was doubtless in wider use then than it had been earlier. In Jesus' day the city of Tiberias, from which the lake took its name, had been built by Herod Antipas, and consequently the lake was not yet known, generally at least, by that name.

2. Followed. Or, according to the tense of the verb in Greek, "were following," that is, constantly. This apparently refers to the general popularity of Jesus at the climax of His Galilean ministry, after an extended period of travel, teaching, and healing among the towns and villages of Galilee (see on v. 1).

They saw. Literally, "they were seeing." As the crowds followed Jesus they repeatedly saw Him working miracles.

Miracles. For comment see pp. 208-213.

3. Into a mountain. Gr. *eis to oros*, "into the mountain," that is, probably, a particularly prominent mountain or hill near the shore in the vicinity of Bethsaida. The translation "into the hills" (RSV) is also possible. The parallel passages in the Synoptics all state that it was a "desert place," that is, an uninhabited locality (Matt. 14:13; Mark 6:32; Luke 9:12). Here Jesus hoped to be alone with His disciples after their return from preaching throughout Galilee (Mark 6:31).

4. Passover. See on v. 1.

A feast of the Jews. This explanatory phrase would have been unnecessary for Jewish readers, and indicates that John wrote with Gentile as well as Jewish readers in mind.

5. Come. Literally, "was coming." The form of the verb in Greek implies that Jesus addressed His question to Philip while the crowd was gathering. The synoptic reports of this miracle, on the other hand, all portray the disciples as bringing the problem to Jesus late in the day. It appears reasonable to conclude that Jesus Himself raised the question of food when the crowd first appeared, and several hours later, finding no solution, Philip and the other disciples returned to their Master with the problem, suggesting that Jesus send the people away without feeding them.

Philip. John is the only gospel writer to mention Philip specifically in connection with this miracle. Since he was from Bethsaida (see ch. 1:44), it was natural for Jesus to turn to him for advice on how and where food might be obtained. However, see on ch. 6:6, 8.

Whence? Gr. *pothen*, “From where?” or, if understood logically rather than geographically, “How?” Philip’s answer, which concerns the means of obtaining food rather than the place from which it might be had, makes it likely that he understood Jesus to be inquiring how it would be possible for them to feed such a multitude.

6. To prove him. Jesus had a much deeper reason for directing His question to Philip than merely the fact that he was a native of the vicinity (see on v. 5), and therefore might be able to suggest a source of food. The Lord’s question was intended to test Philip’s faith. The disciple’s pessimistic reply as to the impossibility of feeding the thousands of people present only made Jesus’ solution of the problem the more impressive. By first drawing from him his own estimate of the situation, Jesus was able, by His miracle, to make an even greater impact on the mind of Philip than would otherwise have been possible.

Knew what he would do. These words reflect the poise with which Jesus faced what appeared to be an insoluble problem. This confidence grew out of His complete faith in the power of His Father to supply the needs of those for whom He would soon make request. This faith, in turn, was the result of complete communion between the Father and the Son (see on Mark 3:13). No sin or self-seeking stood in the way to obstruct the full flow of the Father’s power through His incarnate Son. Only thus could Jesus work among men with full assurance of being able to meet whatever situation might arise, and to fulfill whatever human needs might be presented to Him.

7. Two hundred pennyworth. See on Mark 6:37.

8. Andrew. As in the case of Philip (v. 5), John is the only evangelist to record Andrew’s part in the narrative. These references to particular persons not otherwise mentioned in connection with this miracle are evidence that the Gospel of John is the account of an eyewitness.

Like Philip, Andrew was from the nearby town of Bethsaida. In ch. 12:20–22, John shows Philip going to Andrew, probably for advice and support in presenting to Jesus the case of the inquiring Greeks. It seems probable that in the present instance also, either Philip turned to Andrew for help in the problem Jesus presented to him or Andrew volunteered his remark when he knew of Jesus’ question to Philip, his friend.

9. A lad. Gr. *paidarion*, literally, “a little child.” However, the word is not restricted to this sense, and may denote even a boy who is nearly full grown, as the word is used in the LXX of Joseph (Gen. 37:30) when he was at least 17 years old (see Gen. 37:2), and in the Apocrypha of Tobias, who was old enough to marry (Tobit 6:2). Andrew, being from nearby Bethsaida, may have known this boy personally, which would account for his freedom in suggesting the young man’s personal property as a possible source of food.

Barley loaves. See on Mark 6:38. Barley was considered an inferior food. Philo declares that it is fit for “irrational animals and men in unhappy circumstances” (*De Specialibus Legibus* iii. 57; Loeb. ed., vol. 7, p. 511). Similarly, an ancient Jewish commentary states that “lentils are human food and barley fodder for animals (Midrash Rabbah, on Ruth 2:9, Soncino ed., p. 58). Thus Jesus taught a lesson in simplicity (see on Mark 6:42).

Small fishes. Gr. *opsaria*, the diminutive of *opson*, “prepared food,” “relish.” As small dried or pickled fish were used especially as a relish, *opsarion* referred particularly

to them. That such is the meaning here is clear from the parallel passages in the Synoptic Gospels where instead of this term the regular word for “fish,” *ichthus*, appears. The bread constituted the main part of the meal, and the fish were for relish. This usage is illustrated by an Egyptian papyrus from about the end of the 1st century A.D., which, in ordering provisions for a party, requests: “‘For Gemella’s birthday feast send some delicacies [*ōpsaria*] ... and an artaba [a large measure] of wheaten bread’” (Papyrus Fayyum 119³¹, cited in J. H. Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, p. 470). See on ch. 21:9.

What are they? Andrew seems to have asked the question almost in a spirit of mockery at the thought that Jesus should even suppose it possible that so small an amount of food could feed so large a crowd. Five loaves with a few small fish for relish dramatized only more strikingly the apparently impossible situation. Yet Jesus took Andrew’s illustration of futility and made of it the means of demonstrating God’s power to do that which is otherwise impossible.

10. Make the men sit. The Greek for “men” here is *anthropoi*, “men” in the generic sense, that is, “people,” apparently including all of those present. It is not to be thought that the men sat while the women and children stood.

The men sat. Here, on the other hand, the Greek word for “men” is *andres*, “men” in the specific sense, that is, males. While all sat, yet according to Eastern custom only the men were counted (see Matt. 14:21). The multitude present on this occasion could easily have totaled 10,000 persons. For the seating arrangement see on Mark 6:39, 40.

Jesus’ specific instruction to His disciples to have the people sit down before they were served with food emphasizes the importance of orderliness. Doubtless it would have been impossible for the disciples to make an equitable distribution of the food in a milling crowd; but with the people seated in groups upon the grass, everyone could receive his fair share.

11. Had given thanks. Each of the three other Gospels states that Jesus blessed the bread; John adds the thought that He gave thanks to His Father for the miracle which He knew would ensue. John’s statement is significant of the source of the power by which Jesus worked His miracles (see DA 143). He had veiled His own power as the second person of the Godhead when He took “the form of a servant” (Phil. 2:7). He declared, “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do” (John 5:19; see v. 30). Now He relied completely on the power of His Father (see DA 335, 336, 535, 536), and demonstrated that reliance by offering a prayer of thanks even before the miracle took place. “In His life of assumed humanity, the Saviour relied implicitly upon God; He knew that His Father’s power was sufficient for all things. ... Christ asked His Father’s blessing on the food, and it came” (EGW RH March 29, 1898). Concerning the means by which the miracles of Jesus were performed see DA 143.

Disciples. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of the words, “to the disciples, and the disciples.” Whether these words were originally in the text of John is unimportant from the standpoint of the story, as each of the other Gospels records that Jesus gave the food to His disciples and that they distributed it to the people.

Would. That is, “wished.” The form of the Greek verb used here may be understood to imply that the people repeatedly asked food of the disciples, until all were completely satisfied. The Synoptics record that “they did all eat, and were filled” (Matt. 14:20; Mark

6:42; cf. Luke 9:17). The people were not merely sustained; every man received as much as he desired.

12. Gather up. The Synoptics each record that 12 baskets of food were collected after the people had their fill, but only John reports the fact that Jesus made a special point of gathering up the fragments of food lest anything be lost. He had supplied the needs of the people without limit; they had had more than they could wish. But now, lest anyone think that the bounteous miracle gave license to wastefulness, the Lord carefully taught the lesson of frugality in the use of divine blessings.

13. Baskets. See on Mark 6:43.

14. Men. Gr. *anthropoi*; see on v. 10.

Miracle. See p. 208.

Said. Literally, “they kept saying”; that is, the statement was repeated again and again as it spread through the crowd.

Prophet that should come. Again, John is the only gospel writer to record the impression made upon the people by this miracle (see on Matt. 14:22).

The readiness with which the common people of Galilee were willing to accept Jesus as the Messiah indicates both how general was the expectation of a Saviour and how great the popularity of Jesus had now become. He had already shown Himself to be a leader of men; they knew He could heal any who might be wounded in battle; now they saw that He could furnish an army with food! Surely such a leader would be invincible in battle against the Roman oppressor. He must be the Messiah!

The Jews were keenly aware of the fact that the true prophetic gift had not been manifest among them for several centuries. It is not surprising, then, that they expected its renewal in connection with the coming of the Messiah (for such expectations in the 2d century B.C., see 1 Maccabees 4:46; 14:41; cf. John 1:21). Repeatedly during the 1st century A.D. overzealous Jews were deceived by impostors who proclaimed themselves to be “prophets” and promised to liberate the Jews from Roman rule, as the popular concept of the Messiah envisioned. Josephus (*Antiquities* xx. 5. 1; 8. 6) records the downfall of two such “prophets,” Theudas and an Egyptian (cf. Acts 5:36; 21:38). Jesus warned His disciples against the coming of false “christs,” or messiahs (Matt. 24:4, 5).

15. Take ... by force. [*Jesus Walks on the Lake, John 6:15–24=Matt. 14:22–36=Mark 6:45–56.* Major comment: Matthew.] Gr. *harpazō*, “to seize hastily,” probably the source of the English word “harpy,” a mythological creature supposed to snatch away its prey. This word graphically describes the intent of the people whom Jesus had just fed, and who were now convinced that He was the Messiah. His reticence in claiming kingship only increased their eagerness to make Him king, and the conviction apparently became general that they would have to seize Him quickly and proclaim Him king. They doubtless reasoned that once proclaimed as such, He would then have to defend the claims they made for Him. As it was almost Passover, they may have intended to present Him to the crowds soon to gather at Jerusalem.

In view of the disciples’ later eagerness for the immediate establishment of an earthly kingdom (see Mark 10:35–40; cf. Luke 24:19–21), it is not unreasonable to conclude that they now encouraged the crowd to force Jesus to assert His kingship (see DA 378). See on John 6:64, 65.

King. See on v. 14.

Departed. Gr. *anachōreō*, “to withdraw,” “to go back again,” implying perhaps that Jesus had come down from the hill or hill country where He had sought repose with His disciples, and had met the multitude by the seashore. Accordingly, He would now be returning to the hills for further meditation. In place of *anachōreō* one important early Greek manuscript has *pheugō*, “to flee.” This reading is also retained in some ancient versions. Whatever may be the correct reading, it is clear that Jesus realized a crisis was at hand, and quietly withdrew.

Mountain. See on v. 3.

Alone. The fact that Jesus withdrew alone, whereas before the coming of the multitude He had taken His disciples with Him for meditation and rest, is a further indication that they themselves did not understand His purpose in refusing kingship (see on Matt. 14:22). This day, which had begun as one of relaxation with His disciples after their tour of Galilee, had become, instead, a crucial point in Jesus’ ministry, and its close found Him misunderstood and completely alone. See on Matt. 14:23.

Once more Jesus was victor over the same temptation with which Satan had confronted Him in the wilderness, the temptation to betray the spiritual nature of His kingdom for worldly glory. Once more He had tried to show His uncomprehending followers that His kingdom was “not of this world” (John 18:36), but that it was a kingdom of grace (see Matt. 5:3, 10; 13:18–52), a spiritual realm entered into by believers through the experience of the new birth (John 3:3). Only “at the last trump” will the kingdom of grace be transformed into the kingdom of glory (1 Cor. 15:51–57; see on Matt. 4:17; 5:2).

16. Even. See on Matt. 14:23.

Disciples went down. The accounts in Matthew and Mark indicate that Jesus sent the disciples away while He dismissed the crowd, and thus before He retired to the hills. John, on the other hand, states that Jesus repaired to the hills, and when evening came, the disciples set out across the sea. This seeming discrepancy may be reconciled by understanding that although Jesus instructed His disciples to leave, they did not actually set sail for some time, that is, until evening (see DA 379, 380).

17. Went. Literally, “began to go” over the sea; that is, they started across.

Capernaum. Mark states that Jesus told His disciples to go by ship in the direction of Bethsaida, which was nearly at the northern end of the lake (see Mark 6:45; see on Matt. 14:22). Both Mark and Matthew declare that when they finally came to land, they had come into the region of Gennesaret (Mark 6:53; Matt. 14:34), some 5 mi. (8 km.) to the southwest of Bethsaida. John, on the other hand, says that the disciples set out toward Capernaum, Jesus’ headquarters in Galilee, which lay on the northwest shore of the lake, between Bethsaida and Gennesaret. Their final arrival in the land of Gennesaret probably was due to their being blown off course by the storm.

18. Arose. Literally, “was awakened,” “was aroused.” Sudden, violent storms are frequent on the Lake of Galilee, caused by cool air from the surrounding highlands rushing down through deep ravines to the surface of the lake. These often arise quickly and subside as suddenly. Because of the severity of these storms, even in modern times small fishing boats are said usually to keep close to shore unless the water is especially calm. From their point of departure east of Bethsaida, the disciples would normally never have been far from shore on their way to Capernaum. However, Matthew speaks of them

at this time as being “in the midst of the sea” (Matt. 14:24), and textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for reading “They were many *stadia* away from the land.” Whether or not such a reading is the original, the fact seems to be that apparently because of the storm they missed their destination and landed farther south in Gennesaret. Hence they had been driven far “away from the land.” See on Matt. 8:24; 14:24.

19. Furlongs. Gr. *stadioi* (see p. 50). The disciples had gone about 3 to 3 1/2 mi. (c. 5 to 6 km.), which should easily have brought them to Capernaum, had they not been blown off their course.

See. Gr. *theōreō*, “to notice,” “to give intelligent attention.” The use of the present tense here, in Greek as in English, gives particular vividness to the appearance of Jesus in such an unexpected way.

On the sea. Gr. *epi tēs thalassēs*. This expression appears again in ch. 21:1, where it refers to Jesus’ walking along the shore beside the sea. Consequently it has been argued that John does not necessarily mean to record a miracle here, and that the disciples, being close to land, saw Jesus walking along the shore. While it is true that John’s account, and possibly even Mark’s, may be interpreted this way, the parallel story in Matthew with the narrative of Peter’s walking on the water clearly indicates that Jesus actually walked on the sea.

To Jesus’ disciples this miracle was a testimony to His divinity, as their reaction indicates (see Matt. 14:33). Job speaks of God as He “which alone ... treadeth upon the waves of the sea” (ch. 9:8). An ancient Jewish commentary quotes Ps. 86:8 and then asks, “Why does it say, ‘There is none like unto Thee among the gods, O Lord’? ... Because there is none who can do according to Thy works. For example, a man can carve out for himself a way on a road, but he is not able to do so on the sea, but God carves out for Himself a path in the midst of the sea” (Midrash Rabbah, on Ex. 16:4, Soncino ed., p. 306).

20. It is I. Gr. *egō eimi*, “I am.” These words are found repeatedly in the LXX as the translation of the Heb. *’ani hu’*, “I [am] he,” a declaration by Jehovah that He is God (see Deut. 32:39; Isa. 43:10; 46:4). John records Jesus as having made use of this statement repeatedly at crucial points in His life. Thus in asserting His divine pre-existence, He declared, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58); when foretelling His betrayal, He told His disciples, “Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am” (ch. 13:19); and when accosted by Judas and the soldiers in the garden, in answer to their declaration that they sought Jesus of Nazareth, again He asserted, “I am” (ch. 18:5). Regarding this last instance John adds, “As soon then as he had said unto them, I am [he], they went backward, and fell to the ground” (v. 6). While in many contexts the simple words, “I am,” probably should not be taken as especially significant (such as chs. 6:35; 8:12), yet when used alone by Jesus at a time of crisis in declaring His identity, they appear to have a meaning similar to that in the OT, and thus to be an assertion of His deity. This seems quite clearly to be true in chs. 8:58; 13:19; 18:5. While in the present context such an interpretation perhaps is not quite so clearly indicated, nevertheless the reaction of the disciples in declaring, “Of a truth thou art the Son of God” (Matt. 14:33), implies that Jesus’ words *egō eimi*, “I am,” here too implied more than a simple statement of His human identity.

21. Willingly. Gr. *thelō*, “to will,” “to desire.” The form of the verb used here may be translated “they began to desire.” This verb emphasizes the change of attitude that came over the disciples on hearing Jesus’ words. Before, they were afraid; now they not only were willing to receive Him, but desired His presence. “They were glad to take him into the boat” (RSV).

Immediately ... at the land. This may be interpreted as a further miracle, indicating that as soon as Jesus entered the ship it was supernaturally transported to the shore. On the other hand, John’s words may be understood as indicating that the storm had driven the boat close to the western shore of the sea by the time Jesus appeared. This appears to be supported by the fact that Matthew and Mark give no indication that the voyage was anything but normal, once Jesus had entered the ship. Matthew’s statement that the disciples were “in the midst of the sea” (Matt. 14:24) when they saw Jesus would be understood then as meaning, not that they were in the geographical center of the lake, but that water was all about them. See on v. 17.

22. People which stood. Doubtless many of the 5,000 had returned to their homes in the surrounding area the previous evening, but apparently some, more zealous than others, had remained by the seaside all night, and perhaps others of those who had been fed the day before now returned, seeking a repetition of the miracle. See on v. 24.

Other side of the sea. That is, the eastern shore of the Lake of Galilee, the opposite side from that on which Jesus and the disciples have just been reported to have landed (v. 21).

Saw. It is not easy to specify the exact point of time to which each of the verbs in this verse refers, but it appears that “saw” here is to be understood in the sense of “realized”; that is, the following morning the people left on the eastern shore of Galilee realized the significance of what they had noticed the previous day, that the disciples had taken the only boat available, and that Jesus had not gone with them.

Save that one. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) as to whether the words “save that one whereinto his disciples were entered” are part of the original text. Because certain important ancient manuscripts do not contain these words, and further because they may be seen as an addition to explain an otherwise ambiguous passage, some modern translators have not considered them original, and so have not included them in their versions. Whether or not they are original is not essential to John’s narrative.

23. Howbeit. This verse is intended to explain the source of the boats the people had used to cross the lake the morning after the miracle (see v. 24), for its time element is indicated by the words, “the day following” (v. 22). It is not to be understood as occurring on the previous day when the disciples had left without Jesus, and thus as implying that He might have found passage on the ships from Tiberias.

Boats from Tiberias. See on v. 1. These may have been fishing craft that had been out on the lake during the night (see ch. 21:3) and had been blown to shore by the storm.

After. The time element of the phrase, “after that the Lord had given thanks” refers to the time when the people ate, not to the coming of the boats from Tiberias, which did not occur until the following day.

Had given thanks. John’s specific mention here that the people ate “after that the Lord had given thanks” adds emphasis to the thought that Jesus’ miracle of Feeding the Five Thousand was the direct result of His prayer, and thus that the miracle was the work of the Father mediated through Him. See on v. 11.

24. They also took shipping. Literally, “they also entered the boats,” that is, the boats that had arrived that morning from Tiberias. These were doubtless small craft, and thus the people who found passage in them across the lake could have been but a fraction of the thousands who had assembled the previous day.

Capernaum. Jesus’ headquarters in Galilee, and the place where the people would naturally look for Him. See on v. 17.

Seeking for Jesus. See on v. 26.

25. Found him. [*Sermon on the Bread of Life; Rejection in Galilee*, John 6:25 to 7:1. See *Closing Galilean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord.*] Verse 59 indicates that it was in the synagogue at Capernaum that the people from across the sea found Jesus.

Other side of the sea. Here, in contrast to v. 22, these words refer to the western shore of Galilee. They are used in terms of the preceding context, where the scene is on the eastern side of the lake.

Rabbi. See on Matthew 23:7. Their use of this title for Jesus illustrates their mistaken concept of Him and His work.

26. Verily, verily. See on Matthew 5:18; John 1:51.

Ye seek me. Jesus ignored their question and began immediately to discuss their motives in seeking Him. His laying bare of their materialistic motives applied not only to the satisfaction of their physical appetites but also to the whole range of their ambitious expectations that He would assert Himself as a military conqueror and political ruler.

Miracles. See p. 208.

27. Labour not. The labor that Jesus rebukes here is not that which is necessary in order to gain a livelihood. His rebuke is directed rather toward those who carry such labor to the extent of neglecting the nourishment of the soul. What Jesus here reproves is the common habit of laboring only for the things of time, and ignoring the things of eternity.

Meat. Gr. *brōsis*, referring to something that is eaten, hence food in general.

Everlasting life. See on vs. 53, 54.

Sealed. In ancient times the seal was employed much as a signature is used today; it was a sign of personal attestation or of ownership. In ch. 3:33 this word is used in the first of these senses, and in the present instance it appears to be used similarly, indicating that the Father has testified that Jesus is His Son. All of Jesus’ miracles, worked by the power of the Father, were such testimonies; however, inasmuch as sealing is connected by Paul particularly with the reception of the Holy Spirit, which usually accompanied baptism (see Eph. 1:13; 4:30), it does not seem unreasonable to understand that Jesus’ specific reference here is to His own reception of the Spirit accompanied by His Father’s endorsement at the time of His baptism (see Matthew 3:16, 17).

28. What shall we do? Gr. *tī poiōmen?* “what should we be doing?” The present tense may be understood to imply that the Jews were inquiring regarding a habitual way of life rather than any isolated act. In this they were correct, as is indicated by Jesus’ answer in v. 29. Their question was a tacit recognition that they realized Jesus’ words were an indictment of their religious life in general.

Works of God. These words are found also in Jer. 48:10 (the LXX has the plural as here), where they refer to works desired by God. The Jews’ concept of true religion was to a large extent in terms of works, and so it was natural that in inquiring how they might please God, they asked as to what works they might do.

29. The work of God. Jesus met the Jews on their own ground and framed His answer in terms of their own question. Thus He sought to lead their minds from a mistaken concept of religion into an understanding of what it means truly to please God.

Ye believe. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 146) the reading *pisteuēte*, which implies a continuing habit of belief, instead of *pisteusēte*, which would indicate a specific act of belief at a point of time. The former appears more meaningful in this context.

The words of Jesus here present the basic truth of salvation by faith. To believe (or have faith; the Greek word *pisteuō* may be translated either way) is the primary act of the Christian life; no other act can truly be a “work of God,” a deed desired by God and therefore pleasing to Him, unless faith precedes it, because only by faith does a man come into true relationship to God (see Hebrews 11:6). Jesus’ words here are paralleled by Paul and Silas’ admonition to the Philippian jailer. The jailer cried, “What must I *do* to be saved?” The apostles answered, “*Believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 16:30, 31). See 1 John 3:23.

30. Sign. Gr. *sēmeion*, the same word translated “miracles” in v. 26. See pp. 208, 209. Jesus’ questioners had already seen the miracle of the loaves and fishes and had come to believe that He was the Messiah, but because He did not fulfill their expectation of what the Messiah would do, they had become disappointed. Now as He began to probe into the true condition of their hearts and to demand that they believe in spite of their disappointment, they clamored for an added miracle. Their attitude in making this demand is probably the same as that indicated by an ancient Jewish commentary on Deut. 18:19, which says: “If a prophet begins to prophesy and gives a sign and wonder, then men listen to him; but if not, then men do not listen to him” (Siphre Deuteronomy 18, 19, sec. 177 [108a], cited in Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 1, p. 727).

We may ... believe thee. Gr. *pisteusōmen soi*. This statement is in sharp contrast with Jesus’ admonition in v. 29, *pisteusēte eis hon*, “ye believe on him whom” God sent. Jesus had declared that they should believe *on* Him; the Jews replied by demanding a miracle so that they might believe *Him*, that is, believe what He told them. Once again they failed to realize that salvation lies not simply in intellectual assent but more importantly in union by faith with a Person.

31. Manna. See on Ex. 16:15. An ancient Jewish commentary on Eccl. 1:9 declares concerning the Messiah: “As the former redeemer [Moses] caused manna to descend, ... so will the latter Redeemer [the Messiah] cause manna to descend” (Midrash Rabbah, Soncino ed., p. 33). While this statement, in its present form at least, goes back only to the 4th century A.D., it seems to reflect an earlier tradition that apparently was in the minds of the Jews who disputed with Jesus at Capernaum. Thus 2 Baruch 29:8 declares: “And it shall come to pass at that self-same time [when the Messiah shall begin to be revealed] that the treasury of manna shall again descend from on high, and they will eat of it in those years, because these are they who have come to the consummation of time.” Jesus had recently provided the people miraculously with bread, but, doubting His Messiahship, they now declared that Moses had done an even greater miracle in giving their fathers bread “from heaven.” Furthermore, they apparently implied that Moses’ miracle was to be repeated by the true Messiah; in their view Jesus had not brought bread

from heaven, but had only multiplied simple barley loaves and fish that were already at hand. They must have reasoned that if Jesus was truly the Messiah, He would perform at least as great a miracle as they believed Moses had.

He gave. The words here quoted are not found in exactly this form in either the Hebrew OT or the LXX. They seem to be taken loosely from Psalms 78:24, with Nehemiah 9:15 also in mind. In each of these passages note is made of the fact that it is God who gives the manna, not Moses.

32. Verily, verily. See on Matthew 5:18; John 1:51.

Moses gave you not. The Jews apparently believed that Moses had been responsible for the gift of manna (see on v. 31). Jesus' reply here has been taken by some to be a denial of this belief, and an assertion of the truth that the manna ("that bread from heaven") had really come from God. Others have understood Jesus as not entering into the question of whether Moses had brought down the manna, but rather as declaring that the manna, which was physical food, was not really "bread from heaven" in a spiritual sense, and so was not "the true bread from heaven." It does not seem unreasonable to understand Jesus here as proclaiming both these truths: that God, not Moses, was the giver of the physical manna, and also that true bread from heaven is to be recognized as a spiritual, not a material, gift.

Giveth. The use of the present tense here, in Greek as in English, emphasizes the fact that the Gift of God was being extended to them at that very time in the person of Him who stood before them.

33. Cometh down. The form of the verb in the Greek implies a continuous act. These words speak of Jesus' coming to this world as an eternal fact. (See, by contrast, on v. 38, 41). Up to this point the Jews had thought of Jesus as a giver of bread. Now He began to declare Himself to be the bread itself, though at this point, in the Greek, the statement may be taken as applying either to the bread or to Christ. That the Jews understood Jesus to refer to the bread as that "which cometh down" is clear from their reply in v. 34. At the same time Jewish thinking was not entirely unprepared for a more spiritual concept.

Life. Gr. *zōē*. See on chs. 1:4; 8:51; 10:10. As physical bread promotes physical life, so Christ, "the bread of God ... which cometh down from heaven," is the source of spiritual life.

34. Evermore give us. By this request the Jews showed that they had not understood the implication in v. 33 that Jesus Himself was the bread from heaven. They still thought of Him only as the one who gives bread. Much as the Samaritan woman had requested water that would forever quench her thirst that she might not need to draw water again (ch. 4:15), so now the Jews asked for a continual supply of bread. Moses, as they thought, had provided Israel with heavenly bread for 40 years; if Jesus were truly the Messiah, surely He could work a yet greater miracle and supply them forever (see on vs. 31, 32).

35. I am the bread. Now Jesus clearly declared Himself to be the heavenly bread of which He had been speaking. Three times in the present discourse He repeated this statement concerning Himself (vs. 41, 48, 51).

He that cometh. Gr. *ho erchomenos*, literally, "the one coming." The Greek form of the verb implies, not a single act of coming to Christ, but a consistent habit of life. "He that cometh to me" is here clearly in parallel with "he that believeth on me," for coming to Christ can be accomplished only by faith (see on v. 29). Coming and believing are both "works of God."

Shall never hunger. Jesus' words are in sharp contrast with those found in Ecclesiasticus (a book familiar to the Jews of His time), where wisdom is made to declare: "They that eat me shall yet be hungry, and they that drink me shall yet be thirsty" (ch. 24:21).

37. *All.* Gr. *pan*, an adjective in the neuter gender, and thus to be understood in the broadest sense. Jesus here expressed the truth that all things, His power and authority, His daily bread, His followers, were given Him by His Father. He declared, "I can of mine own self do nothing" (ch. 5:30; see on ch. 6:11). This verse is not to be taken as indicating that God has selected certain persons for salvation, and that they inevitably will come to Christ and be saved (see on v. 40). It is rather a declaration in the broadest terms of the relationship of Jesus to the Father, a relationship of complete surrender, utter dependence, and entire confidence that all that God willed for Him would surely be fulfilled.

Him that cometh. The second clause of this verse is a specific application of the general truth stated in the first clause. Only in God's love is grace provided by which the sinner may come to Jesus, and through Him, to the Father.

In no wise cast out. An example of the figure of speech known as litotes, an understatement designed to give emphasis. Thus Jesus meant that He heartily welcomes the one who comes to Him.

38. *I came down.* Literally, "I have come down." The perfect tense, in the Greek, points to a specific act and also contemplates the existing results of that act. In v. 33 the incarnation is referred to as an eternal fact; here it is viewed from the standpoint of the specific event of Jesus' birth among men, and the result of that event as seen in His ministry and abiding presence is also contemplated. See on vs. 33, 41.

Mine own will. Jesus' complete submission to His Father is an assurance to the believer that all that Jesus does for him has its source in the loving heart of God. Christ's words here clearly demonstrate the falsity of the opinion that God is angry with man and that salvation for sinners has its basis in Christ's having appeased the Father's wrath. Rather, Jesus' life of ministry and sacrificial death for man were expressions of His Father's love.

39. *Father's.* Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 146) the omission of this word, and the reading, "This is the will of him which hath sent me." Whether or not the word was in the original text, reference is, of course, to the Father.

All. Gr. *pan* (see on v. 37). That this verse is not to be taken as indicating that a man who has once accepted Christ is inevitably His forever is clear from such passages as Luke 9:62; John 15:9, 10; Hebrew 6:4–6. Neither does this verse teach predestination in the sense that God's choice of a man from eternity is the determining factor in one man's salvation and another's damnation (see on John 6:40). Rather, it is an expression of Jesus' complete reliance upon His Father. See on ch. 3:17–20.

I ... should raise it up. Gr. *anastēsō auto*. As previously in this chapter, so here the object is neuter, including not only men but all things given to Christ by the Father. In v. 37 Jesus had stated that it is the Father's will that all things should come to Him; now He carried the thought further to assert that God's will in this respect extends to the "last day." Here Jesus looked forward to "the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father" (1 Cor. 15:24); when every creature in the universe

will declare, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:13).

40. *Sent me.* Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading, "This is the will of my Father," rather than "This is the will of him that sent me." Here Jesus reasserted the statement He had made in v. 37, that it is the Father's will to save. Now He made it clear that not only does the Father desire sinners to come to Christ, but that His purpose also extends to the consummation of the plan of salvation at the time of the resurrection.

Every one. Gr. *pas*, a masculine adjective indicating a person, as contrasted with *pan*, "all [things]," in vs. 37, 39. As v. 37 first lays down a general truth, and then makes a specific application of that truth to the case of the man who comes to Christ, so also v. 39 lays down the same general truth in an even broader way, and v. 40 applies that truth to the specific case of everyone who sees Jesus and believes on Him. The Father's assurance that His Son will finally receive all things that are due Him provides assurance that each individual man who believes on the Son will be raised by Him when He finally claims His own.

Seeth the Son. This does not mean, of course, that only those who saw Jesus in the flesh will have part in the resurrection. The word "seeth" implies here spiritual insight, beholding with the eye of faith, as is indicated by the accompanying word "believeth." See ch. 12:45.

Believeth. As in v. 35, Jesus here again asserted the pre-eminent function of belief in Himself. This emphasis on faith clearly shows that intellectual assent is not enough; those who will have part in the resurrection of the righteous are those who believe, who have faith acting beyond the limits of their natural senses.

Everlasting life. See on John 8:51; 10:10; 1 John 5:12; cf. DA 388.

I will raise him up. As contrasted with the similar passage in v. 39, this statement is notable in that the object, "him" (Gr. *auton*), is masculine, indicating a person, rather than neuter as in v. 39 (see comments there). Here Christ speaks specifically of the righteous who will be raised from their graves, in view of the fact that all things that are Christ's will finally be claimed by Him.

This passage is significant also for the emphatic position of the pronoun "I." The sense of Jesus' declaration is, "I, even I, will raise him up." As it is Christ who mediates between God and man and who saves man from sin, so also it is He who raises man up in the last day. See ch. 5:25–27.

41. *Which came down.* Gr. *ho katabas*. Here the descent of Christ from heaven to earth is viewed from the standpoint of His incarnation (see on chs. 3:13; 6:33, 38). Failing to recognize Jesus as indeed the Son of God, the Jews were piqued at the mere thought of His claiming to have come from heaven.

42. *Son of Joseph.* The words of this verse appear to reflect the Aramaic *Yeshua' bar Yoseph*, "Jesus son of Joseph," the name by which Jesus probably was known among His neighbors. To them, the idea that He was the son of Joseph and Mary, whom they knew, completely ruled out the possibility of His having a heavenly origin.

I came down. Literally, "I have come down (see on v. 38)."

43. *Murmur not.* Significantly, Jesus made no attempt to explain the mystery of His birth and of His divine parentage. Rather, He immediately turned to the spiritual problem

that lay behind the Jews' misunderstanding of His words. Murmuring could not bring them enlightenment.

44. Except the Father. Essentially, salvation is God's work, not man's. Man must come to God of his own free will, but his coming is possible only in view of the fact that God draws him through His love. See on Jer. 31:3.

I will raise him up. See on v. 40.

45. The prophets. These words are evidently used in a technical sense to refer to the prophetic section of the Hebrew Bible, which was already so designated in Jesus' day (see Luke 24:44; Acts 7:42; 13:40; Vol. I, p. 37; cf. the Prologue to Ecclesiasticus).

Be all taught. This quotation is taken from Isa. 54:13, but does not follow exactly either the traditional Hebrew text (reflected in KJV) or the LXX, which may be translated, "And all thy children [shall be] taught of God." In the present passage it was probably adapted to fit the context.

Ancient Jewish interpreters understood this passage in Isaiah to be prophetic of the work of God in the day when the Messiah would come. They declared: "God said to Abraham: Thou hast taught thy children the Law in this world, but in the future world I will teach them the Law in my glory, as it says: And all thy sons shall be disciples of Jehovah" (from *Tanchuma B*, cited in Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 4 p. 919). If such an understanding was current in Jesus' time, His use of this scripture would seem to have had a Messianic implication to His hearers, and this makes clearer His conclusion that everyone who has learned of the Father comes to Him.

Of the Father. Literally, "from the Father." This indicates that it is not merely hearing and learning *about* the Father that brings men to Christ, but that one hears *from* the Father the message He would have man know regarding the salvation that may be found in Jesus. The same expression appears in ch. 8:26, 40 in reference to the word preached by Jesus, which He had received from His Father, and in ch. 7:51 of a man's testimony concerning himself. The word that God has spoken to the world in Jesus is indeed a testimony to His own love for man. The important truth is also taught here that hearing from God is insufficient if a man does not learn, that is, if he does not heed what he hears.

46. Of God. Literally, "from the side of God," "from beside God." Christ, who is God Himself, came to this earth from His position at the side of the Father. See chs. 7:29; 16:27; 17:8; see on chs. 1:1; 3:13.

47. Verily. See on Matt. 5:18; John 1:51.

He that believeth. That is, he who has faith.

On me. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) as to whether these words should be considered a part of the original text. See on ch. 1:12.

Hath everlasting life. Through faith in Christ the Christian partakes of the life of God. As he has faith now, so also he receives of that eternal life now (see on John 8:51; 10:10; 1 John 5:12; cf. DA 388).

48. I am. See on v. 35.

49. Are dead. The Jews had proudly claimed that Moses had given their fathers manna from heaven to eat (see vs. 30, 31), and they had challenged Jesus to demonstrate His Messiahship by working an even greater miracle. He did not meet their demand with a miracle, but pointed them rather to the spiritual significance of Messiahship, the fact that He offered them sustenance for eternal life. Now, He aptly reminded them that their

fathers, of whom they were so proud, who had eaten the manna, nevertheless were dead. In proof of His claim to being greater than Moses, Jesus declared that He, Himself the bread from heaven, could give eternal life (see on v. 50).

50. Which cometh down. Jesus does not speak here specifically of His birth, but of the fact that from eternity He is the Mediator between God and man, the One by whom God communicates with the world and through whom He saves the world (see 1 Cor. 8:6).

Not die. The manna, which the Jews claimed Moses had given their fathers (see v. 31), had not prevented their dying; but Jesus offers a heavenly sustenance that ensures eternal life.

51. I am. See on v. 35.

Which came down from heaven. Here, as contrasted with the previous verse, the Greek simply states the fact that Christ came from heaven to earth at the time of the incarnation. Upon this fact Jesus based His claim to having eternal life for the world.

Eat of this bread. Compare on v. 53; see DA 390, 391.

I will give. In speaking of the gift of Christ to the world in vs. 32, 33 the present tense is used, emphasizing that He is a continuing, eternal gift. But here, as in v. 27, the future is used, which focuses upon the specific event of the cross, when Christ gave His “flesh,” in a climactic act, “for the life of the world.”

Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) a simpler reading at this point, but one that in no way changes the sense of the sentence: “And the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.”

Flesh. Gr. *sarx*, a word that John has already used of Christ’s incarnation (see on ch. 1:14; cf. its use in ch. 17:2). In the present passage “flesh” seems clearly to refer to Christ’s humanity, with no thought of the imperfection implied by the word in chs. 3:6; 6:63. Because He took upon Himself humanity, the Son of God was able to give His “flesh”, that is, to die and thus to make His perfect humanity available to those who partake of Him by faith.

52. Strove. Gr. *machomai*, “to fight,” and thus when used as here of verbal encounter, “to dispute,” “to quarrel.” When Jesus had claimed to be the bread from heaven, the Jews had begun to murmur (v. 41); now, when He invited them to eat of His flesh, their emotions rose still higher. Apparently some of them saw a deeper meaning in His words than did others, but they all seem to have been confused by placing too literal a construction on His words. See on v. 53.

53. Drink his blood. This declaration must have shocked Jesus’ literal-minded hearers still more (see v. 52), for the Law specifically prohibited the use of blood for food (Genesis 9:4; Deut. 12:16). If the Jews had recalled the reason for this prohibition, they might better have understood the meaning of Jesus’ words. The reason given for the prohibition is that the blood is the life (Gen. 9:4). Thus they might have realized that to eat His flesh and drink His blood means to appropriate His life by faith. “To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ is to receive Him as a personal Saviour, believing that He forgives our sins, and that we are complete in Him” (DA 389; cf. 8T 169, 170; EGW RH Nov. 23, 1897). It is only because Christ gave His human life for us that we may partake of His divine, eternal life.

54. Whoso eateth. Gr. *ho trōgōn*, a present participle, implying continual eating, a constant feeding. It is not enough once to have partaken of Christ; His followers must continually nourish their spiritual beings by feeding on Him who is the bread of life. Jesus had just declared that “he that believeth on me hath everlasting life” (v. 47); now He added, “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.” From this it is clear that to eat His flesh and drink His blood means to believe, to have faith in Him. See v. 53.

I will raise. See on v. 40.

55. My flesh is meat. See on v. 53.

56. Dwelleth in me. Elsewhere John declares that the man who keeps God’s commandments dwells in Him (1 John 3:24). This, compared with the present passage, emphasizes the practical nature of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ.

57. Living Father. Repeatedly the Deity is spoken of as the “living God” (see Deut. 5:26; Matt. 16:16; Acts 14:15; 2 Cor. 6:16). He is the One who lives of Himself without dependence upon any other for His life; thus He is also the source of the life of all others in the universe. What is true in this respect of the Father is also true of the Son, for “in Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived” (DA 530). See Additional Note on John 1.

By the Father. Literally, “because of the Father.” Although He is God, yet while on earth in human flesh Jesus was completely dependent upon His Father (see on v. 11). He lived “because of the Father.” Thus the Christian is to be dependent upon Christ and to receive from Him the divine life and the divine nature (see DA 123). It is this eternal life that the Christian may partake of now, and it is also this life that will bring him forth in the resurrection (see ch. 5:26–29; cf. DA 388).

58. Manna. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of this word. With either reading it is clear that the reference is to the manna.

59. Taught in Capernaum. There is some textual evidence (cf. p. 146) for adding “on the sabbath” to v. 59. While it is virtually certain that the original text of this passage did not contain these words, these manuscripts do preserve the interesting tradition that Jesus’ Sermon on the Bread of Life was given on the Sabbath day. The disciples would not have made the journey back to Capernaum after sundown Friday night (see p. 50; see on Matt. 14:22–36).

That Jesus repeatedly taught in the synagogues is clear from a number of statements (see Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 12:9; 13:54; Mark 1:39; 3:1; John 18:20). As the center of Jewish communal life the synagogue was a logical place for Him to come in contact with the people and stimulate their religious thinking (see p. 56).

This synagogue at Capernaum was probably the same one presented to the Jews of that city by the centurion (see Luke 7:5). Formerly it was thought that ruins still in existence at *Tell Hûm* (generally recognized as ancient Capernaum) were those of the synagogue. It is now clear, however, that the ruins in question probably are no earlier than the 3d century A.D.; nevertheless they doubtless stand on the remains of an earlier structure that might have been the building in which Jesus taught. If so, it may be reasonable to think that the ruins to be seen today reproduce in general the outlines of the synagogue of Jesus’ time.

The present ruins, some 50 ft. wide by 70 ft. long, are of white limestone, and are oriented so that the congregation faced south, that is, toward the Temple in Jerusalem. On three sides of the main chamber there was a balcony for the women and children, which

was supported by columns and was reached by a stairway from the outside. The main floor seems to have been reserved for the men. At the side of the building is a courtyard.

60. His disciples. That these were not primarily the Twelve, but others from the large crowds that had been following Jesus, appears clear from vs. 66, 67. Ever since their disappointment at the Feeding of the Five Thousand, when Jesus had refused to let them make Him king, these people had been growing continually more critical of Him. They had followed Him to Capernaum in the hope of continuing to receive miraculously provided food, but when He rebuked them for this and declared that instead they must look for spiritual nourishment and partake of Him, their criticism grew into outright rejection.

Hear it. The Greek verb here employed, *akouō*, may mean either “to listen to” or “to obey” (much in the same sense as the Heb. *shema*‘; see on Matt. 7:24). Also *autou* may be translated either “it,” referring to the statement Jesus had just made, or “him,” pointing back to Jesus Himself. Thus the disgruntled disciples’ question may be understood either as, “Who can listen to it [or, to Him]?” or “Who can obey it [or, Him]?” Refusing to realize the spiritual truth of Jesus’ words, and insisting on only their literal meaning, they protested the utter impossibility of eating His flesh or drinking His blood. To their unwilling minds Jesus’ words were indeed “an hard saying.”

61. Knew in himself. See ch. 2:25.

Disciples murmured. Up to this point only the Jews are spoken of as murmuring against Jesus (see v. 41). Now those who have been openly His followers turn from Him and fall in line with their fellow countrymen who have been opposing Jesus. Three groups seem to have been present in the synagogue during this discourse: the Twelve, who had crossed the lake during the storm; the followers of Jesus who had crossed to Capernaum the following day; and those whom John speaks of as “the Jews,” who apparently were largely critical of Jesus from the beginning.

Offend. Gr. *skandalizō* (see on Matt. 5:29).

62. What and if? Jesus’ question is given without a conclusion. It may be taken as meaning that if they should see the Son of man ascend to heaven, then in their stubbornness they would be offended even more; or it may be understood as implying that if they should see Him ascend, it would be a proof to them that He had indeed come from heaven, and they would realize the true spiritual meaning of His words. The fact that Jesus apparently did not state the conclusion of His question is significant in itself, for either of these conclusions could have been correct, depending upon the heart of the man who might see His ascension.

Where he was before. See ch. 3:13.

63. That quickeneth. Literally, “that which makes alive.” Jesus had been exhorting His hearers to partake of the heavenly food that would give life; now He pointed out even more clearly that such food is spiritual, a fact that His hearers thus far had not realized.

Flesh. This is not the flesh referred to in vs. 51–56. There Christ’s flesh and blood are used together in speaking of the spiritual sustenance received by the one who partakes of the life of his Lord. Here the word “flesh” is used in a different context; it is contrasted with “spirit,” and thus clearly refers to the material things of this life, and particularly to material food, which cannot sustain eternal, spiritual life.

Speak. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 146) the reading “I have spoken.” The reference is thus directly to the words of this discourse that Jesus had just spoken, and indeed, was still speaking.

They are spirit. The truths Christ uttered are concerned with spiritual things, and to receive them into the heart by faith is to receive spiritual life (see on ch. 3:16; cf. ch. 17:3).

64. That believe not. Again Jesus emphasized the importance of belief, or faith. His words were spirit and life only to those who believed. See on vs. 29, 40.

Knew from the beginning. See ch. 2:25.

Who should betray him. Apparently the statement, “There are some of you that believe not,” included Judas as well as the unbelieving Jews. Judas’ difficulty lay in the fact that he refused to accept the truth that Jesus’ kingdom was to be spiritual. Instead he looked for a material, earthly kingdom in which he hoped to have a prominent place (see DA 718–721). His acceptance of Jesus’ words upon this occasion would have corrected his basic misconception.

65. Except it were given. This verse is a logical sequel to Jesus’ statement, “There are some of you that believe not” (see on v. 64). For Judas these words should have had special significance (see on v. 64). In his own pride and self-confidence Judas was trying to maneuver events so that Jesus would be proclaimed king by the Jews (see on v. 15). He was attempting by his own cleverness to bring into existence the coming kingdom, as he conceived it to be. But in all this he failed to recognize that man is not the author of the plan of salvation and cannot save himself; and that although man can cooperate with God to hasten the triumph of His cause in the world, the gift of salvation and the coming of the kingdom are the work of God. See on vs. 37, 39.

66. Went back. This marks the turning point of Jesus’ work in Galilee, and indeed, of His whole ministry. Until this time He had been widely accepted as a popular teacher and prophet. Now many of His followers left Him, and from this time on He stood more and more in the shadow of the cross.

67. The twelve. This is the only time that John refers to the twelve disciples as “the twelve,” and he does so without any previous report of Jesus’ choice of the group. Similarly he introduces Pilate (ch. 18:29) and Mary Magdalene (ch. 19:25) into his narrative without explaining who they were. This seems quite clearly to indicate that John, writing several decades after the other Gospels had come into circulation, was conscious of the fact that those who read his account would already be acquainted through the Synoptic Gospels and other reports with the main personalities involved in Jesus’ life. A realization of this fact makes it easier to understand why the Fourth Gospel does not seek to give the systematic coverage that is found in the Synoptics, but is rather a theological interpretation of certain significant events of Christ’s ministry.

Will ye also go away? The construction of this question in Greek implies a negative answer, so that the force of the sentence is, “You do not wish to go away also, do you?” As John has just stated, Jesus knew who of His followers were true to Him and who were not (v. 64). Consequently this question was not asked for His own information, but rather to test the Twelve as to what their motives were in following Him.

68. To whom shall we go? Contrast these words with Peter’s statement on another occasion, Luke 5:8.

Words of eternal life. Although Peter doubtless did not yet comprehend fully the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, nevertheless his declaration here shows that he had begun to have insight into the fact that the words Jesus had spoken were indeed the key to eternal spiritual life.

An ancient Jewish commentary describes the words that God spoke from Sinai as "words of life" (Midrash Rabbah, on Ex. 20:2, Soncino ed., p. 343). Peter's use of a similar term here to refer to what Jesus had just said, together with his recognition of Jesus as the Messiah immediately afterward (v. 69), reveals that he realized the divine source of Jesus' words.

69. We ... are sure. The Greek verb may be translated, "we have found out," implying that they had already learned the truth here, and still believed it to be true in spite of the many who now rejected Jesus. Peter, speaking for the Twelve, declared that not only had they had faith that Jesus was the Messiah, but also, because of the miracles they had seen and the words they had heard, they now could say that they knew He was the Son of God. The uncomprehending Jews had seen the same miracles and heard the same words. But they lacked faith, and as a result had turned away in disbelief. The disciples, accepting the words and works of Jesus by faith, had reached the opposite conclusion, and were now convinced that Jesus was the Messiah. In matters of the spirit, faith leads to knowledge.

That Christ. Textual evidence indicates that in ancient times there was considerable difference among manuscripts as to the reading of the last part of this verse. Thus Tertullian's text reads simply, "the Christ," while others have "the Christ the Holy One of God," "the son of God," and "the Christ the son of God." However, the evidence seems to favor (cf. p. 146) the reading "the Holy One of God."

This title, "the Holy One," occurs repeatedly in Jewish literature produced in the intertestamental period as a title for God (see Ecclesiasticus 4:14; 23:9; 43:10; Baruch 4:22, 37; 5:5). In this sense it was probably familiar to the disciples, and so Peter's use of it here for Christ would seem to constitute a recognition of His divinity.

70. Them. John recognizes that Peter was speaking for the Twelve.

A devil. That is, one inspired by the devil (see ch. 13:2). Jesus' words may be compared with His similar statement to Peter at another time (Mark 8:33). Jesus recognized here that although Peter considered himself to be speaking for the Twelve, Judas did not share in Peter's consecration (see on v. 64, 65).

71. Judas Iscariot. See on Mark 3:19. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading "Judas the son of Simon Iscariot." If, as is probable, the name Iscariot refers to Judas' place of origin, it would reasonably be both his name and that of his father.

Betray. The phrase reads literally, "he was going to betray." The Greek in no sense indicates that Judas was predestined inevitably to betray Jesus. From his point of view many years later, John merely looks to the future and exclaims: "For this one was going to betray Him—one of the Twelve!"

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-13DA 364-371

1-71CH 370; FE 456

5 DA 293; MH 45

5-10DA 365

7 DA 293

7, 9 MH 45
9 DA 369
9-136T 345
12 AH 381; CD 271, 298; CG 135; CH 300; CM 151; COL 352; CS 37, 269; DA 368, 380;
MH 48, 207; MM 176; TM 257, 345; 2T 292, 435; 4T 451, 573; 5T 400, 413, 415; 6T
209, 451; 7T 206, 239; WM 154
14 DA 377
14-21DA 377-382
15 DA 378; FE 382
21 DA 382
22-71DA 383-394
24 DA 383
25-27DA 384
26 EW 57, 95, 121
27 CT 31; FE 185; MB 112; 6T 153
27-31DA 385
28 MYP 141
28, 29 MB 87
30 DA 626
31 MH 311
32 6T 132
32-36DA 386
33 COL 129; SC 68
33-35FE 455
35 Ev 501; MB 18; MH 441; 3T 190; 6T 345; 8T 288, 307
37 AA 28; COL 206, 280; DA 387, 429, 821; MH 66; PK 320; PP 431; TM 517; 8T 101
38 DA 330; 3T 107
40 AA 513; DA 387; SR 319
42, 44, 45 DA 387
44, 45 FE 460
45 DA 388, 412; ML 361; TM 488
45-51CW 120
47 MH 441; 6T 88
47-51DA 388; FE 383, 518
47-578T 170
47-638T 299
48-51PP 297, 354
50 6T 165; 7T 31
51 CD 89; COL 223; CT 430; DA 24; FE 456; MB 112; TM 385, 488; 7T 226; 8T 308
52-58CW 121
53 CH 593; CS 27; DA 719; SC 88; TM 339, 345, 487; 7T 205, 270; 8T 193; WM 19
53, 54 CH 371; PP 277; 6T 165
53-56FE 386, 470; ML 275
53-57DA 389, 660; 5T 575
54 CH 423; DA 388, 787; FE 378, 474; GW 252; TM 390; 6T 444
54-57FE 457

54–63COL 130
 56 TM 441; 6T 52; 9T 168
 57 DA 21; GW 252; 8T 288
 58 CT 422; FE 237; 6T 150, 163; 7T 165, 203
 60 COL 48; DA 390, 392; 1T 543; 4T 469; 5T 431
 61–63DA 390; FE 518
 63 COL 38; CSW 43; CT 207, 379, 439; CW 121; DA 251; Ed 126; FE 182, 378, 383, 408, 456; GW 252; MH 441; MM 324; PP 227; SC 88; TM 160, 389, 492; 1T 361; 5T 433, 576; 8T 288, 307; 9T 136, 168
 64 Ed 92
 64, 65 DA 391
 66 DA 392; FE 460; 4T 90; 6T 133
 67–69DA 393; 6T 156
 68 TM 285
 70 DA 655, 673, 720; 4T 41

CHAPTER 7

2

1 *Jesus reproveth the ambition and boldness of his kinsmen: 10 goeth up from Galilee to the feast of tabernacles: 14 teacheth in the temple. 40 40 Divers opinions of him among the people. 45 The Pharisees are angry that their officers took him not, and chide with Nicodemus for taking his part.*

1. After these things. The phrase thus translated is common in John (chs. 3:22; 5:1, 14; etc.). It denotes a transition from one narrative to another but gives no indication as to whether the interval is long or short.

Walked. Gr. *peripateō*, literally, “to walk around,” metaphorically “to live,” “to pass one’s life,” etc. Here both the literal and metaphorical meanings apply.

Jewry. Rather, Judea, as distinguished from Galilee, Samaria, Peraea, and Idumaea.

Kill him. See ch. 5:18. The arraignment before the Sanhedrin recorded in ch. 5 occurred about a year before the events of chs. 6:1 to 7:1. Shortly after the arraignment Jesus had retired to Galilee (see on Matt. 4:12), and about a year later gave the Sermon on the Bread of Life (John 6), one that terminated His active ministry in Galilee. At that time “the passover ... was nigh” (ch. 6:4), and the phrase, “would not walk in Jewry” (ch. 7:1), implies that Jesus did not attend the approaching Passover (cf. DA 395).

2. Tabernacles. [*At the Feast of Tabernacles, John 7:2–13.* See Early Peraean Ministry; The Duration of Christ’s Ministry, the Opening of the Galilean Ministry, The Ministry of Our Lord .] This feast began on the fifteenth of Tishri (Lev. 23:34). The interval from Passover to Tabernacles was about six months. The feast continued for seven days, during which the Israelites dwelt in booths, in remembrance of their dwelling in tents when they came out of Egypt (Lev. 23:40–42; cf. Neh. 8:16). In addition the eighth day was to be a “sabbath” (Lev. 23:39). Like the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Harvest (Pentecost), this Feast of Ingathering was one of the “three times ... in the year” when every male Jew was required to appear before the Lord (Ex. 23:14;

²Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Jn 5:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Deut. 16:16). Josephus says that it was “considered especially sacred and important by the Hebrews” (*Antiquities* viii. 4. 1 [100]). It was at once a thankful memorial of the national deliverance and a yearly rejoicing at the close of each harvest (Lev. 23:42, 43; Deut. 16:13–16).

3. His brethren. For a discussion of the brothers of Jesus see on Matt. 1:18, 25; Matt. 12:46; cf. DA 450, 451. They did not yet believe in Him (John 7:5; see EGW Supplementary Material on Acts 1:14).

Depart hence. Jesus’ “brethren” were disappointed in Him. They could not understand His ways. They wondered why He did not capitalize on His popularity. They doubtless thought of the personal glory and benefit that would accrue to them should He assert His Messiahship. Now that many of His disciples had rejected Him (ch. 6:66), these brothers probably hoped that by manifesting His power in the capital city, the religious center of the nation, He might regain some of His lost prestige.

Thy disciples. The ministry in Judea had produced but meager results (see on Matt. 4:12; John 3:22). Nevertheless Jesus had disciples there. In fact, He had left Judea because of difficulties that arose out of His popularity with the people of that region (John 4:1–3).

4. To the world. These “brethren” desired Jesus to show Himself openly to the multitudes gathering in Jerusalem for the feast, and display before them His wonderful miracles. There, they hoped, the rulers would test His claims, and if He were the Messiah and His wonderful works genuine, then amid the joys of the feast, in the royal city of His realm, they hoped He would be proclaimed king. Their solicitude may be compared with that of Mary at the marriage feast, who hoped that Jesus would prove to the group gathered there that God had chosen Him (ch. 2:3, 4).

5. Brethren believe. They knew He worked miracles, for they had no doubt seen Him perform them. Even now they were hoping He would go to Jerusalem and dazzle the eyes of the assembled multitudes with His miracles. But in spite of the miracles they were filled with doubt and unbelief. Jesus did not fulfill their concept of the Messiah, and they doubted that He ever would. Perhaps they felt He was too retiring, and were trying to give Him the encouragement of which they thought He was in need.

6. Time. Gr. *kairos*, “auspicious moment” (see on Mark 1:15).

Not yet come. Compare Jesus’ statement to His mother (ch. 2:4). His brethren may have been well meaning in what they proposed, but Jesus knew best. To Him the events of life were marked out by certain divinely ordered seasons, with an appropriate time for accomplishing each purpose (see on Luke 2:49; John 2:4).

Always ready. Like all circumspect Jews, the brothers of Jesus regularly attended the feast, and the particular day they chose to begin their journey was of no special moment.

7. World. The brothers had requested Jesus to show Himself to the world (v. 4), but He reminds them that the “world” hates Him (cf. ch. 15:18). Their suppositions (see on vs. 3, 4) were false. Were He to follow their proposal He would not receive the acclamation they anticipated. On the other hand, their sympathies and interests were in harmony with those of the world. Consequently the world could not hate them, inasmuch as the world loves its own (ch. 15:19).

Testify of it. Men resent the exposure of their evil ways. Cain slew Abel “because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous” (1 John 3:12). “Every one that doeth evil hateth the light” (John 3:20).

Ye. In the Greek this pronoun is in the emphatic position.

Yet. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) as to whether this word was in the original manuscript of the Gospel.

Not yet full come. See on v. 6.

9. Still. This word has been supplied by the translators. How long Jesus remained in Galilee we are not informed. He arrived at Jerusalem about the middle of the feast (v. 14).

10. In secret. This phrase suggests that He did not travel by the usual caravan routes. He probably selected a seldom traveled route through the region of Samaria (cf. DA 452).

11. The Jews. By this expression John usually refers to the official representatives of the nation rather than the common people (vs. 12, 25). There was doubtless considerable uncertainty as to whether Jesus would be present at the feast. He had been absent from the preceding Passover (see on chs. 6:1; 7:1).

Where is he? Literally, "Where is that one?" "That one," Gr. *ekeinos*, may here be used in a derogatory sense.

12. The people. That is, pilgrims from various regions, including those from Galilee who had been present when the 5,000 were fed and who attempted to crown Jesus king (ch. 6:1–15). When Jesus thwarted their efforts they murmured (v. 41; cf. v. 61). They doubtless continued their murmuring at the feast and infected others by their attitude. Here the word seems to mean a subdued, more or less secret, discussion, rather than an open complaint. The statement, "He is a good man," is hardly a complaint.

Good. Gr. *agathos*, "good" from a moral point of view. Using the word in its Jesus spoke of God as the only one who is "good" (see on Matt. 19:17). Some in the multitude had become convinced that Jesus was indeed the Messiah and defended their convictions, although not openly (John 7:13).

Deceiveth. Gr. *planaō*, "to lead astray," "to lead into error." The Jewish leaders referred to Jesus as "that deceiver" (Matt. 27:63).

13. For fear of the Jews. Compare chs. 19:38; 20:19.

14. Now. [*Teaching in the Temple*, John 7:14–52. See Early Peraean Ministry.]

The midst. Since the feast continued till the eighth day, the midst was probably about the fourth day (cf. on vs. 2, 37).

15. Marvelled. Literally, "continued to marvel."

Letters. Gr. *grammata*. The word may denote the individual symbols of the alphabet (Luke 23:38), correspondence (Acts 28:21), books or writings (John 5:47), the "[holy] scriptures" (2 Tim. 3:15), or learning, whether elementary or more advanced. The last definition seems best to apply here. The surprise was not that Jesus could read or write, but that He was so well informed and was able to present so learned a discourse. They knew He had not been trained in the rabbinical schools. A truly educated person according to their definition was one who not only had received his instruction from a recognized teacher, but had also been closely associated with that teacher and had served him. Self-education in the Scriptures was not unheard of, but such an education was looked upon as vastly inferior to the recognized training in the rabbinical schools. See Talmud *Soṭah* 22a, Soncino ed., pp. 109, 110.

16. Doctrine. Gr. *didachē*, “teaching,” from *didaskō*, “to teach,” a word occurring 97 times in the NT and consistently translated “to teach.”

Not mine. Jesus denied that He was self-taught, and at the same time claimed a source far higher than that of the rabbinical schools. God Himself had been His teacher.

That sent me. A common phrase in John (chs. 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; etc.; see on ch. 3:17).

17. Will do his will. Or, “wishes to do his will.” The clause may be translated, “if any man’s will is to do his will” (RSV). He who sincerely desires to do the will of God will be enlightened by God and enabled to evaluate correctly the claims of others. A prerequisite to receiving light is that the seeker for truth must be willing to follow in the light that may be revealed. For comment on how the will of God may be ascertained from the Bible see on Eze. 22:28.

The difficulty of finding out “what is truth” in religion is a common subject of complaint among men. They point to the many differences that prevail among Christians on matters of doctrine, and profess to be unable to decide who is right. In thousands of cases this professed inability to discover truth becomes an excuse for living without any religion at all.

18. Glory. Gr. *doxa*, here meaning “honor,” “fame,” “reputation.” Self-appointed teachers pride themselves in their knowledge and seek the praise and honor of men. Pride and self-seeking are frowned upon by Heaven (see Matt. 6:2, 5, 16). He who displays these characteristics is not a true teacher.

True. Gr. *alēthēs*, when used of persons, as here, “genuine,” “true,” “honest.” The adjective is applied to Jesus (Matt. 22:16; Mark 12:14; John 7:18), and to God (John 3:33; 8:26; Rom. 3:4), but in the NT not to human beings except in 2 Cor. 6:8 *Alēthēs* is here paralleled with the phrase “no unrighteousness.” The implication in the contrast here set forth is that the self-styled teachers with an exaggerated estimate of their own importance and merit are untrue, dishonest, and unrighteous.

19. Did not Moses? The form of the question in Greek shows that a positive answer is expected. The question was one to which all Christ’s hearers would reply affirmatively. Moses was the intermediary through whom the laws of God were delivered to Israel (Lev. 1:1, 2; 4:1, 2; etc.; cf. John 1:17). The people held him in the highest esteem and professed to obey him most faithfully. “Law” is here used in its general sense of the instructions of the Pentateuch.

None of you. Jesus is building His argument on the premise laid down in v. 17. The will of God was contained in the Pentateuch, but this will the Jews were not obeying. Consequently they were incapable of judging as to whether the teachings of Jesus were from Heaven or not.

Kill me. See John 5:16, 18; see on Matt. 20:18. The limits of obedience to the divine will are too often marked by individual prejudices and opinions of what constitutes obedience. Too many are content with what is merely outward. Too few strive to obtain from Christ His perfect righteousness.

20. Devil. Gr. *daimonion*, “a demon.” Compare the charge in Matt. 9:34; 11:18.

21. One work. That is, the healing of the infirm man on the Sabbath day upon His last visit to Jerusalem, 18 months previously (ch. 5; cf. DA 450).

22. Circumcision. For the command see Lev. 12:3.

Of the fathers. Circumcision had not originated with Moses. It had been introduced in the time of Abraham as sign of the covenant (Gen. 17:10–14; cf. Rom. 4:11).

On the sabbath. According to the Mishnah the Jews were allowed, on the Sabbath, to perform all things needful for circumcision (*Shabbath* 18. 3, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 641). Rabbi Jose said, “Circumcision is a great precept, for it overrides [the severity of] the Sabbath” (Mishnah *Nedarim* 3. 11, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 93).

23. Should not be broken. Rabbi Eliezer (c. A.D. 90), whose thinking probably reflected that of the Jewish leaders in the time of Christ, reasoned thus: “Circumcision overrides the Sabbath; why? Because if one postponed it beyond the appointed time he would on its account render himself liable to extirpation. ... If he overrides the Sabbath on account of one of his members, should he not override the Sabbath for his whole body [if in danger of death]?” (Tosephta *Shabbath* 15. 16, cited in Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 2, p. 488).

Every whit whole. Circumcision involved the mending of only one member of the body. Jesus had mended the entire body. The following statement of the Talmud dates from about A.D. 100, but probably reflects earlier thinking: “If circumcision, which attaches to one only of the two hundred and forty-eight members of the human body, suspends the Sabbath, how much more shall [the saving of] the whole body suspend the Sabbath!” (*Yoma* 85b, Soncino ed., p. 421). If life was in danger, the Jews permitted ministry to the sick; but if there was no immediate danger, treatment was forbidden and postponed (see on ch. 5:16). The case of the infirm man at Bethesda did not come under this category. The sufferer had waited for 38 years, and to have postponed his healing an additional day would have made no difference. Thus, according to the tradition of the Jews, Jesus stood condemned. However, their reasoning was illogical. If they permitted circumcision to override the Sabbath, much more should they permit an act of healing such as Jesus performed. Furthermore, they permitted the Sabbath to be overridden repeatedly, for there were many acts of circumcision performed every Sabbath, and yet Jesus was condemned for “one work” (ch. 7:21).

24. Judge not. Better, “stop judging.” That is, stop your habit of judging by outward appearance.

The appearance. Compare Deut. 16:18–20; 1 Sam. 16:7.

Righteous judgment. Such judgments would have led to the conclusion that acts of mercy such as Jesus had performed on the Sabbath were not a violation of Sabbath law. Jewish traditional law with regard to the Sabbath contained numerous provisions whereby the law could be circumvented. For example, there were stringent laws prohibiting the carrying of burdens on the Sabbath, yet if the Jews desired to transport an object on that day, they had means of legally accomplishing their objective. The following statement from the Mishnah illustrates their legal fiction: “If one carries out [an article] whether with his right hand or with his left hand, in his lap or on his shoulder, he is culpable, because thus was the carrying of the children of Kohath. In a back-handed manner, [e.g.], with his foot, in his mouth, with his elbow, in his ear, in his hair, in his belt with its opening downwards, between his belt and his shirt, in the hem of his shirt, in his shoe or sandals, he is not culpable, because he has not carried [it] as people [generally] carry out” (*Shabbath* 10. 3, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, pp. 339, 440).

25. Of Jerusalem. The residents of Jerusalem are here referred to, seemingly in contradistinction to the multitudes from Galilee and other outlying regions of Palestine.

Is not this he? The form of the question in Greek shows that a positive answer is expected.

26. They say nothing. This is indeed a surprise. Jesus is speaking openly and boldly, and the Jewish leaders remain silent. The people propose a possible reason: that further investigation has led the leaders to the conclusion that Jesus is indeed the Messiah.

Know. That is, have they come to recognize? The people were wrong in their proposed reason. The leaders were as determined as ever to destroy Jesus.

27. This man. They were acquainted with the earthly ancestry of Jesus. “Is not this the carpenter’s son?” they once said (Matt. 13:55). However, they appeared to be ignorant of His birth in Bethlehem (John 7:42).

When Christ cometh. For the title Christ, signifying Messiah, see on Matt. 1:1; cf. John 1:41. The statement, “No man knoweth whence he is,” must not be understood as meaning ignorance concerning the descent of Christ from the tribe of David, for with this fact the Jews were familiar (Matt. 22:42). Nor does it imply ignorance concerning Messiah’s birthplace, for when Herod demanded of the chief priests and of the scribes where Christ should be born, they answered, “In Bethlehem of Judaea” (Matt. 2:4, 5). There is probably a reference here to a popular belief concerning the Messiah reflected in a saying of Trypho the Jew: “But Christ—if He has indeed been born, and exists anywhere—is unknown, and does not even know Himself and has no power until Elias come to anoint Him, and make Him manifest to all” (Justin Martyr, *Dialogue With Trypho* 8).

28. Ye both know me. Jesus did not deny the facts concerning His earthly parentage. Nor did He stop to argue their point of theology. Instead He expostulated with them concerning their ignorance of God, and again asserted that He had not come on His own authority (see on vs. 15, 16). He was known to the people in human form, but He wished them to know also concerning His divinity and Sonship with God.

True. Gr. *alēthinos* (see on ch. 1:9).

Whom ye know not. The Jews had a greatly distorted picture of the character of the heavenly Father. Centuries of stubbornness and rebellion had prevented them from seeing God as He really was, a kind and merciful Father. They thought of Him as cruel and exacting, and in many respects not too different from the heathen deities worshiped by neighboring nations. Through Jesus, God had chosen to correct this misconception. As men beheld Him whom God had sent they were to obtain a picture of what the Father was like (see on ch. 1:18). Jesus declared, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (ch. 14:9). In rejecting Jesus, the Jews rejected the Father’s revelation of Himself and so continued on in their ignorance of the Father.

29. I know him. For a discussion of the close relationship between the Father and the Son see on ch. 1:1, 18.

30. They sought. Rather, “they began to seek.”

Not yet come. See on v. 6.

31. The people. In contradistinction to the rulers, who were seeking the life of Jesus.

More miracles. The Greek construction shows that a negative answer is expected. The following translation illustrates the force of this construction: “He will not do more miracles than this one, will He?” For a discussion of miracles see pp. 208, 209.

32. Pharisees. This sect was especially hostile to Jesus, and now took the initiative in calling the Sanhedrin together. The chief priests were for the most part Sadducees. On the Sanhedrin see p. 67.

Murmured. Gr. *gogguzō*, here apparently denoting a subdued discussion, or debate, rather than complaint (see v. 12).

Officers. Presumably the Temple police.

33. Them. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of this word. The context seems to indicate that Jesus directed His remarks to the people generally, not simply to the Temple police sent to arrest Him, as the pronoun “them” might seem to indicate.

A little while. From the Feast of Tabernacles to the Passover the following spring, when Jesus was crucified, was about six months. Three years of His ministry was in the past and but half a year remained.

34. Ye shall seek me. There is probably a reference here to the future judgment, when men will lament their rejection of Christ, but will seek salvation in vain, because it is too late (see Jer. 8:20; Amos 8:11, 12; Matt. 7:21–23; 25:11, 12; Luke 13:25–30).

35. Dispersed. Gr. *diaspora*, “dispersion.” The word has been carried over into the English. *Diaspora* is a technical word referring to the Jews scattered through the Old World after the Exile.

Gentiles. Literally, “Greeks.” The term frequently designates heathen nations in general (Rom. 1:16; 2:9; etc.). Here the Hellenistic Jews are probably meant.

36. What manner? The Jews could not understand the enigmatic statement. Even Peter could not grasp the implications of Jesus’ assertions (ch. 13:37).

37. Last day. There is a difference of opinion as to whether the 7th or the 8th day of the feast is meant. There is some doubt as to whether the appellation “that great day of the feast” could appropriately be applied to the 8th day. The feast lasted for seven days (Lev. 23:34), but the eighth day was “an holy convocation” Lev. 23:36). If Jesus’ statement has reference to a water-libation ceremony immediately preceding (see below; cf. DA 454), it seems necessary to identify the “last day” as the 7th day, for in the time of Jesus the ceremony was apparently performed only on the first seven days of the feast (see Mishnah *Sukkah* 4, 1, 9, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, pp. 193, 226).

If any man thirst. This saying of Jesus undoubtedly has reference to the water-libation ceremony conducted during the 7 days of the feast. The Mishnah describes the ceremony thus: “How was the water-libation [performed]? A golden flagon holding three logs was filled from the Siloam. When they arrived at the Water Gate, they sounded a teki‘ah [long blast], a teru‘ah [tremulous note] and again a teki‘ah [long blast]. [The priest then] went up the ascent [of the altar] and turned to his left where there were two silver bowls. ... The one on the west was for water and the one on the east for wine” (*Sukkah* 4, 9, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 226). According to the Talmud (*Sukkah* 48b, Soncino ed., p. 227) the three trumpet blasts had reference to the Scripture statement, “Therefore with joy shall we draw water out of the wells of salvation” (Isa. 12:3). The ceremony followed the morning burnt offering (Tosephta *Sukkah* 3, 16, cited in Strack and Billerbeck, vol. 2, p. 800), and was connected with the ritual of the drink offering. The two bowls contained openings connected with an underground passageway. The sizes of the openings were such that the water and the wine would drain out in

approximately the same length of time (Mishnah *Sukkah* 4. 9, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 226; Talmud *Sukkah* 48b, Soncino ed., p. 229; cf. DA 449).

Come unto me. For seven successive days the people had witnessed the water-liberation ceremony and had entered into the other activities of the feast, but there had been little to satisfy the longing of the spiritual life. Among them stood He who was the source of life, who could supply the living waters to satisfy every true need.

Of the satisfaction to be found in Christ, thousands of Christians can testify. They have found in Him more than they had expected. They have tasted His peace, and their doubts and fears have been taken away. They have found grace to the measure of their need, and strength according to the demands of their days. In themselves they have been often disappointed, but never have they been disappointed in Christ.

38. *He that believeth on me.* It is possible to punctuate the text, as certain ancient authorities do, so as to connect this clause with the verb “drink” of v. 37. The thought would then be: “If any man thirst, let him come unto me; he that believeth on me let him drink.” If this reflects the intended relationship, then the “his” his of the next clause refers to Christ rather than to the believer. However, the evidence seems to be in favor of the punctuation adopted by the KJV, RSV, etc., and supported by the Greek Fathers. According to this the “his” refers to the believer who himself becomes the source of spiritual blessing (see below under “rivers of living water”). Ancient Greek manuscripts were without punctuation, and the punctuation now appearing in the Bible is the work of later editors. For an example of faulty punctuation see on Luke 23:43; cf. on John 4:35, 36.

As the scripture hath said. It is not certain what particular Scripture passage is here referred to. Perhaps the phrase refers to the preceding or the succeeding thought. The following passages may be compared: Prov. 18:4; Isa. 12:3; 44:3; 55:1; 58:11; Eze. 47:1; Zech. 14:8.

Belly. Gr. *koilia* here used metaphorically for the inner being.

Rivers of living water. The only in living communion with Christ becomes himself a center of spiritual influence. There is in him a power of life which, when quickened by faith, flows forth as a river, carrying life and refreshment to others. The true Christian who grasps a great truth that satisfies his own yearnings cannot long refrain from giving expression to it. He longs to send it forth to others who are seeking spiritual waters. There is formed within him a river of waters that no dam can wholly confine (see on ch. 4:14).

39. *Of the Spirit.* This verse is an explanatory parenthesis by John intended to clarify and emphasize the preceding thought. John wrote his Gospel about 60 years after the incident here related. In the interval he had seen the effective working of the Holy Spirit in the spread of the gospel.

Was not yet given. See Acts 1:4, 5, 8; Acts 2:1–4.

Not yet glorified. A reference to the death and resurrection of Jesus (see ch. 12:16, 23, 24).

40. *The Prophet.* See on Deut. 18:15; John 1:21. In the thinking of the Jews “the Prophet” does not always seem to have been identified with the Messiah.

41. *Christ.* That is, Messiah (see on Matt. 1:1).

Out of Galilee. Compare ch. 1:46. Their arguments are based on outward appearances. Jesus had spent most of His life there, and His ministry had largely been

restricted to that province. They were familiar with the prophecy of Micah 5:2 (see John 7:42), but apparently ignorant of the import of that of Isa. 9:1, 2.

42. *The seed of David.* See on 2 Sam. 7:12, 13.

The town of Bethlehem. See on Micah 5:2.

Where David was. See 1 Sam. 16:1.

43. *There was a division.* Compare chs. 9:16; 10:19.

44. *Would have taken.* The Greek may be rendered, “wished to take.” Some, probably of the multitude, were by this time ready to act, or at least to aid and abet the baffled officers of state in their task, but no man laid hands on Him. His hour had not yet come (see on v. 6).

45. *Not brought him.* See v. 32. The members of the Sanhedrin were doubtless highly indignant at the defeat of their plan to arrest Jesus.

46. *Like this man.* See on Matt. 7:29. Concerning the precise manner of our Lord’s public speaking we can form only a remote idea. Action and voice, delivery and articulation, are things that must be seen and heard to be appreciated. That our Lord’s manner was peculiarly solemn, arresting, and impressive, we need not doubt. It was probably something very unlike the Jewish intonations at the readings of the Law, and quite different from what officers and people were accustomed to hearing.

47. *Are ye also deceived?* In the Greek the emphasis is on the “ye.” The “ye” are in addition to the multitude (vs. 40, 41). According to the narrative the Pharisees make no inquiry as to what has been said. Their minds are already made up. As far as they are concerned Jesus is a deceiver of the people (see Matt. 27:63; cf. John 7:12).

48. *Rulers.* That is, the authorities, members of the Sanhedrin and probably others. Lacking scriptural support, men seek to supply the deficiency by employing force and the power of authority. Men who resist often seal their testimony with their blood. The future will see a similar attempt by the civil authorities to suppress truth (Rev. 13).

49. *People who knoweth not.* Anciently, educated Jews referred contemptuously to the common people as, literally, “people of the soil,” Heb. *‘amme ha’areṣ* (singular *‘am ha’areṣ*, Aramaic *‘amma’ de’ar’a*). See p. 55; see on ch. 7:52.

50. *Nicodemus.* For his identity see on ch. 3:1. He who sought out Jesus by night now speaks on His behalf in the daylight. His statement was an answer to their question, “Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?” (v. 48).

51. *Before it hear him.* For the principle here expressed see Deut. 1:16, 17; 17:2–7; 19:15. Nicodemus pleads for just and fair treatment, according to law. When Jesus was later arrested and condemned to death many rules of Jewish jurisprudence were broken (see Additional Notes on Matt. 26, Note 2).

52. *Art thou also of Galilee?* By this question the leaders seek to evade Nicodemus’ question, a question for which there could be but one answer. The Pharisees imply that Nicodemus has joined the Galilean sympathizers of Jesus. Their provincial jealousy is reflected in their disdain of the less cultured Galilean Jews (see on ch. 7:49).

Ariseth. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the reading “has arisen.” Such a reading would emphasize the confusion of their thinking, for, such a generalization they would be unable to defend. Jonah is described (2 Kings 14:25) as of Gath-hepher, a town of Zebulun, in lower Galilee (see Vol. IV, p. 995). Possibly Elkosh, the birthplace of Nahum the prophet, was also in Galilee (see on Nahum 1:1). Against the generalization is also the testimony of Rabbi Eliezer (c. A.D. 90): “There was not a tribe in Israel from

which there did not come prophets” (Talmud *Sukkah* 27b, Soncino ed., p. 121). If the reading “ariseth” is adopted, then the application may be to the future, that is, one would not expect a future prophet to arise from Galilee.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 MB 2
- 1–15DA 447–454
- 3, 4 DA 450
- 6 DA 485
- 6–9DA 451
- 10 DA 452
- 11–13DA 451
- 14 DA 452
- 15 DA 70, 453
- 16 GC 243
- 16, 17 DA 455
- 16–36DA 455–462
- 17 CE 61; CM 42; COL 36; CSW 28; DA 258, 459; FE 125, 307; GC 528, 599; PP 384; SC 111; TM 179; 2T 514; 3T 427; 4T 335, 527; 5T 705
- 18 DA 21
- 18–22DA 456
- 19 TM 75
- 19–23TM 76
- 23–32DA 457
- 27, 28 TM 76
- 33–35DA 458
- 37 DA 453, 454; Ed 116; Ev 266; GW 34; MH 179; ML 157; Te 106; 8T 12, 20; 9T 146, 179
- 37, 38 CT 450; DA 453; Ed 83; MH 103; 7T 276
- 37–39PP 412
- 38 AA 13; Ev 382; PK 233; 6T 274; 7T 24
- 44–48DA 459
- 45, 46 EW 161
- 46 CSW 48; CT 29, 260; CW 80; DA 251, 459; Ed 81; EW 161; FE 181, 236; MH 23, 52, 469; 5T 433, 747; 6T 248
- 47, 48 DA 459
- 51 DA 699
- 51, 52 TM 370
- 51–53DA 460
- 53 MH 86; 2T 508

CHAPTER 8

1 *Christ delivereth the woman taken in adultery.* 12 *He preacheth himself the light of the world, and justifieth his doctrine:* 33 *answereth the Jews that boasted of Abraham,* 59 *and conveyeth himself from their cruelty.*

1. Jesus went. [*The Woman Taken in Adultery*, John 7:53 to John 8:11. See Early Peraean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord.] This entire section (chs. 7:53 to 8:11) appears in only one of the early uncial manuscripts (D), although Jerome claims that it

was present in a number of Greek manuscripts. The large majority of the Old Latin manuscripts do not have it. The passage is nowhere commented on in the extant writings of the early Church Fathers. The first comments are found following the time of Jerome, in the West, and not until the 10th century in the East. A few manuscripts place the narrative after Luke 21:38. These and certain other considerations, such as an alleged difference of style, have led scholars to the conclusion that this narrative did not appear in John's autograph copy. However, they admit that the narrative appears to be authentic and that it is in full harmony with what Jesus did and taught. This commentary takes the position that the narrative is authentic.

The mount of Olives. See on Matt. 21:1; 26:30.

2. Early in the morning. This incident occurred the following morning, on the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles (see on ch. 7:37).

Sat down. For this posture while teaching see on Matt. 5:1.

Taught. Rather, "began to teach," as He had earlier (ch. 7:14).

3. Brought unto him. Such cases should properly be brought to the courts. The scribes and Pharisees had contrived a plot to ensnare Jesus so that they might secure His condemnation. Their procedure was contemptible. There was no need to make such a public show of the case before the multitudes assembled at the Temple. Their own public humiliation that followed (v. 9) was fully merited.

4. Master. Literally, "Teacher."

5. Stoned. The law of Moses prescribed death for adultery when a married woman was involved, but did not specify the manner of death. According to the Mishnah death in these cases was inflicted by strangulation (*Sanhedrin* 11. 1, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 558). The law prescribed death by stoning when a betrothed woman was involved (Deut. 22:23, 24). This is also the rule of the Mishnah (*Sanhedrin* 7. 4, 9, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, pp. 359, 451, 452). It seems likely, therefore, that the case in question was one of a betrothed woman.

What sayest thou? In the Greek the word "thou" is in the emphatic position. Jesus is set over against Moses. The Pharisees were more concerned with entrapping Jesus than with punishing the woman. They felt that no matter what answer Jesus gave they could involve Him in condemnation. They doubtless knew of His willingness to forgive, and perhaps expected that He would recommend leniency. In this case they could charge Him with setting aside the law. If He recommended carrying out the penalty, they could charge Him with usurping the authority of Rome, which at that time reserved jurisdiction in capital cases.

6. Tempting him. See on v. 5.

Wrote. This is the only record of Jesus writing. Much indeed has been written about Him, but none of His writings have been preserved. The characters He wrote on the pavement dust were soon obliterated by the Temple traffic. According to tradition He wrote down the sins of the accusers (cf. DA 461). The practice of writing in the sand is referred to in the Mishnah (*Shabbath* 12. 5, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 503).

7. Without sin. Jesus gives the persistent inquirers an answer they are not expecting, and for which they are unprepared. None of them can lay claim to sinlessness. Perhaps before Heaven's tribunal some of them are more guilty than the woman (cf. DA 461). None of them accepts the challenge.

Jesus is not stating a general principle, one that would make absolute sinlessness the necessary condition of fitness for taking part in the punishment of guilt. This would nullify law, for no one fitted to carry out the execution could be found. He speaks here of a case where men set themselves up as judges of others, whom they ought not to condemn unless they themselves be guiltless. Jesus abhorred adultery (see on Matt. 5:27–32), but He also abhorred self-righteous judging (see on Matt. 7:1–5).

First. That is, be the first of the group to cast a stone.

Cast a stone. According to Deut. 17:7 (cf. ch. 13:9), the witnesses were to be the first to cast a stone upon the condemned man. The procedure of stoning is described in the Mishnah as follows: “The place of stoning was twice a man’s height. One of the witnesses pushed him by the hips, [so that] he was overturned on his heart. He was then turned on his back. If that caused his death, he had fulfilled [his duty]; but if not, the second witness took the stone and threw it on his chest. If he died thereby he had done [his duty]; but if not, he [the criminal] was stoned by all Israel, for it is written: The hand of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people [Deut. 17:7]” (*Sanhedrin* 6. 4, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 295).

8. Wrote. Rather, “kept on writing.” See on v. 6.

9. Convicted. They had come to convict the woman. They went away convicted by their own conscience. They left the scene doubtless fearing that the guilty secrets of their lives, and particularly their own complicity in this case (see DA 461), would be revealed to the multitude. Their defeat could not have been more dramatic.

10. Woman. See on ch. 2:4.

11. Lord. Gr. kurios, here perhaps simply “sir” (see on ch. 4:11). However, it is possible that she had earlier heard of Jesus and knew something of His claims. If so, she might have used the address with deeper significance, in acknowledgment of His position as the Son of God. There is no attempt at defense. There is no plea for forgiveness.

Sin no more. Compare ch. 5:14. “God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (ch. 3:17). Jesus’ words came to the trembling woman as words of mercy, in abrupt contrast with the angry words of her accusers. Jesus pointed her to the chief thing for which she stood in need—the immediate forsaking of her sins. Repentance must be honest and sincere. Not only must she be sorry for her sin; she must turn away from it. That repentance which consists in nothing more than feeling, talking, professing, wishing, hoping, is utterly worthless in the sight of God. Until a man ceases to do evil and turns from his sins, he does not really repent (see on Ps. 32:1, 6; 1 John 1:7, 9).

12. I am. [*The Light of the World, John 8:12–30.*] See on chs. 1:4–9; 6:20.

Light of the world. As Jesus’ statement concerning the living water (ch. 7:37, 38) had reference to the water-libation ceremony of the Feast of Tabernacles, so His statement declaring Himself to be the light of the world was doubtless connected with the ceremony of lights. This ceremony is described in the Mishnah as follows: “At the conclusion of the first Festival day of Tabernacles they descended to the Court of the Women where they had made a great enactment [a special women’s gallery]. There were there golden candlesticks with four golden bowls on the top of each of them and four ladders [according to the Talmud the candlesticks were fifty cubits high] to each, and four youths drawn from the priestly stock in whose hands were held jars of oil containing one hundred and twenty log which they poured into the bowls.

“From the worn-out drawers and girdles of the priests they made wicks and with them they kindled the lamps; and there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that was not illumined by the light of the place of the water-drawing.

“Men of piety and good deeds used to dance before them with lighted torches in their hands, and sing songs and praises. And Levites without number with harps, lyres, cymbals and trumpets and other musical instruments were there upon the fifteen steps leading down from the Court of the Israelites to the Court of the Women, corresponding to the Fifteen Songs of Ascents in the Psalms [Ps. 120–134]. It was upon these that the Levites stood with their instruments of music and sang their songs” (Sukkah 5. 2–4, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, pp. 242, 243; cf. DA 463).

For the significance of Jesus as “the true Light” see on ch. 1:4; cf. DA 464, 465.

In darkness. In one of their commentaries on the book of Exodus the Jews represent the words of the Torah (Law) as illuminating the one who engaged in their study. Concerning the one not engaged in their study or ignorant of them the comment says: “He stumbles against a stone; he then strikes a gutter, falls into it, and knocks his face on the ground—and all because he has no lamp in his hand. It is the same with the ordinary individual who has no Torah in him; he strikes against sin, stumbles, and dies” (Midrash Rabbah, on Ex. 27:20, Soncino ed., p. 439).

The Jews had One standing in their midst who was greater than the Torah, for He Himself had given them the Torah. He was the source of the light in the Torah (see PP 366). But the rabbis had so obscured that light with their traditions that he who attempted to walk in the light of the Torah as interpreted by the rabbis was in reality walking in darkness.

Light of life. This phrase may be interpreted as the light that is life, or that gives life, or that has its source in life. Not only is Jesus the light; He is also the life (chs. 11:25; 14:6; see on ch. 1:4). He that receives Him receives life: “He that hath the Son hath life” (1 John 5:12). In Jesus is “life, original, unborrowed, underived” (DA 530). He came to this earth that men “might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). “God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son” (1 John 5:11).

13. Thy record is not true. Following the Bethesda incident Jesus Himself set forth the principle the Jews here appealed to (ch. 5:31). The Law of Moses clearly stipulated that in capital cases the witness of only one man was insufficient for conviction (Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6). The principle appears also in the Mishnah: “No one may testify concerning himself” (*Kethuboth* 2. 9, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 151). “An individual is not authorized [to say “sanctified”] by himself” (*Rosh Hashanah* 3. 1, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 113).

14. My record is true. A man’s self-witness is not necessarily false. The testimony of an honest man would be reliable. Jesus, being who He was, a divine Being, and proceeding from God, who cannot lie (Titus 1:2), would naturally speak the truth. But the Jews made Him out to be an ordinary man. They acknowledged neither His divine origin nor His destiny. Furthermore, if a collateral witness was required, He had one. The Father, who sent Him, was with Him (John 8:16, 18; see on ch. 5:31–39).

15. After the flesh. They judged the human side of Jesus, not discerning His divinity. The expression occurs also in 1 Cor. 1:26; 2 Cor. 5:16. Compare John 7:24.

I judge no man. Jesus' present work was not that of judgment but of salvation (see on ch. 3:17). Not till the end of the age will He "judge the quick and the dead" (2 Tim. 4:1; cf. Acts 10:42; 2 Cor. 5:10).

16. My judgment. See on v. 14.

17. Your law. This expression occurs again in ch. 10:34; and the comparable expression "their law," in ch. 15:25. These passages are not to be construed to mean that Jesus dissociated Himself from, or was antagonistic to, the law. He had not come to destroy the law or the prophets (Matt. 5:17). He Himself had delivered the sacred precepts to Moses. By "your law" Jesus meant either the law they claimed to expound, defend, and keep, or their traditional interpretation of it (see on Mark 7:5–13).

Testimony of two men. See Deut. 17:6; 19:15; cf. Num. 35:30.

18. Beareth witness. See on v. 14.

19. Where is thy Father? These words are probably spoken in scorn, and with a possible allusion to the circumstances of Jesus' birth.

Nor my Father. Jesus traces their ignorance of the Father to its true cause, that is, to their neglect of the means by which the Father had chosen to reveal Himself. The means was then at hand. Jesus was revealing the character and personality of the Father before them (see on ch. 1:14). Had they known Jesus aright they would have known His Father. To His disciples, Jesus said, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also" (ch. 14:6, 7).

20. Treasury. For the location of the "treasury" where Jesus taught see on Mark 12:41. Presumably He was in the Court of the Women, because women had access to it (Mark 12:41). See Josephus *War* v. 5. 2 (200).

Not yet come. See on v. 6.

21. Ye shall seek me. See on ch. 7:34.

Die in your sins. Many of His hearers would seek Him too late, having discovered too late that He was the Messiah whom they should have received while they had the opportunity to do so. But the door of mercy would be shut for them. They would seek in vain. The result would be that they would perish in their sins, without pardon or forgiveness (see on Jer. 8:20).

22. Will he kill himself? The form of the question in Greek shows that a negative answer is expected. The suggestion is very different from that of ch. 7:35. Some have conjectured that the Jews are making reference to "the darkest place in Hades," to which, Josephus (*War* iii. 8. 5 [375]) declares, suicides are consigned. The place would be inaccessible to the living.

Their inquiry was not entirely beside the point. Jesus would die, and His death would place Him beyond their reach. But He would go to heaven, a place which, in their impenitence, they would never reach, not to Hades as they may have intended to imply. Their question in ch. 7:35 was likewise vaguely prophetic. Following His death His emissaries were to go to the Jews dispersed among the Gentiles, and also teach the Gentiles (Acts 1:8).

23. From beneath. See on ch. 3:31. The contrast is between this present world and heaven (cf. Col. 3:1). They spring from this lower world; consequently they are influenced by considerations drawn from the earthly, sensual, superficial, and transitory. Jesus came from heaven as man's Redeemer, the long-awaited Messiah. Concerning this great fact Jesus sought to enlighten their minds.

24. Die in your sins. The Jews were dependent for salvation upon acceptance of the Deliverer whom God had sent. There was salvation in none other (Acts 4:12). Their rejection of the Saviour left them without a cloak to cover their sins (John 15:22).

I am he. Gr. *egō eimi*. The “he” is supplied. The same expression occurs in vs. 28, 58, and again in ch. 13:19. In the LXX *egō eimi* represents the Heb. *’ani hu’*, literally, “I am he” (Deut. 32:39; Isa. 43:10). It is this relationship that doubtless led translators to supply the “he” in the present passage. Compare the expression “I am that I am” (Gr. *egō eimi ho ōn*) (Ex. 3:14). There may have been a direct allusion to Isa. 43:10, where the wording is strikingly similar to this present passage, “that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he.” See on John 6:20.

25. Who art thou? Literally, “*Thou*, who art *thou*?” There was a vagueness in Jesus’ statement, and so the present question was probably an attempt to draw from Him some statement that could be made the ground of a technical charge. But Jesus avoided giving a definite answer to the question.

From the beginning. Gr. *tēn archēn*. There has been much discussion over the translation of this phrase, but on the whole the translation as it appears in the KJV, RSV, etc., seems preferable and is defensible. Some suggest that the phrase should be rendered “primarily [in essence].” Others suggest the translation “at all,” and make the passage a question, “How is it that I even speak to you at all?” (RV margin). However, the context favors the rendering “from the beginning.” Jesus says, in substance, “I have been informing you about it all the time.”

26. I have many things. The first part of this verse may be translated, “I could say many things concerning you and judge, but,” etc. Such a rendering provides a better explanation for the adversative “but” than the common translation.

Of you. Literally, “concerning you.”

He that sent me. Compare v. 16; cf. ch. 12:49; see on ch. 3:17.

27. They understood not. Because their minds were darkened spiritually (see on Hosea 4:6).

28. Lifted up. The reference here is to the crucifixion, though the word translated “lifted up” is also used of the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:33; see on John 3:14; cf. John 12:32). To the Jews the statement was enigmatic, though some present doubtless understood it after the crucifixion. Significantly, the shameful lifting up on the cross was the prelude to Christ’s true exaltation (Phil. 2:9).

Son of man. See on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10.

Then shall ye know. Events connected with the crucifixion and resurrection provided evidence that Jesus was all He claimed to be. The destruction of Jerusalem confirmed the prophecy of Jesus.

I am he. See on v. 24.

29. Not left me. Jesus again emphasizes His union with the Father (cf. ch. 17:21). He had always cooperated with the Father in the divine purpose and plan and had always done that which was well pleasing to Him. He was never left alone. The Father had testified to His pleasure in the Son (Matt. 3:17).

30. Believed. Rather, “began to believe,” or “came to believe.”

31. Then said Jesus. [*The Argument About Descent From Abraham, John 8:31–59.*]

On him. Literally, “him.” In v. 30 the phrase “on him” is a literal rendering of the Greek. It is possible that a distinction is intended between the group mentioned in v. 30 and that mentioned here. There is a difference between believing *in* a man and believing a man (see on ch. 1:12; cf. ch. 3:16). In the latter case one may merely believe that certain things he says are true. If the distinction is valid, the change in attitude of the “believers” that is evident in the remainder of the chapter is more easily explained.

Continue. Gr. *menō*. The same word is translated “abide” in ch. 15:4–7. Continuance in the doctrine of Jesus is evidence of the sincerity of the original profession of faith in Jesus.

Indeed. Gr. *alēthōs*, variously translated “truly” (Matt. 27:54), “of a truth” (Luke 9:27), “surely” (Matt. 26:73), “verily” (1 John 2:5). Patient continuance in the word in the face of trial and opposition is the mark of true discipleship. Jesus was exhorting those who had fixed their faith in Him to remain steadfast. There was danger that many of them would be wayside or stonyground hearers (see on Matt. 13:4, 5).

32. Truth. A frequent word in John. In its basic meaning truth is that which corresponds to fact. John frequently, as here, uses the word in a wider sense to denote what is true in things pertaining to God and the duties of man, or in a more restricted sense the facts taught in the Christian religion concerning God and the execution of His purposes through Christ. This revelation had been given by Jesus (ch. 1:17). He, in fact, was “the truth” (ch. 14:6). He was “full of grace and truth” (ch. 1:14). These facts concerning the Christian religion are revealed also by the Spirit, who Himself is truth (1 John 5:6; cf. John 14:17, 26), and by the Word (John 17:17). See on ch. 1:14.

Make you free. The glorious truths of the gospel had been foreshadowed in the writings of Moses and the prophets. Paul describes the OT era as one of “glory,” and notes that the new era will far exceed it (2 Cor. 3:9). But many of the truths concerning the religion of Jehovah had been obscured by the inventions of the Jews. The minds of the people were blinded and a veil was over their hearts when they read the OT (2 Cor. 3:14, 15). They were bound by the burdensome traditions of the elders (Matt. 23:4; see on Mark 7:1–13) and by their sins (Rom. 2:17–24; cf. Rom. 6:14; Gal. 4:21). Jesus came to set them free. He declared that His mission was “to preach deliverance to the captives” (Luke 4:18). To those who accepted the truth He promised liberty (cf. 2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 5:1).

33. Abraham’s seed. For the boast of the Jews concerning descent from Abraham see on Matt. 3:9; John 3:3, 4.

Never in bondage. This was a falsehood, if literal bondage was referred to. Egypt had been to them a “house of bondage” (Ex. 20:2). The period of the judges had been punctuated by repeated foreign oppressions. Later there had been national humiliation at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians. However, it is possible that the Jews were referring to spiritual freedom of soul, which here they doubtless boast they had never lost. This may be reflected in a statement of Eleazar, leader of a band of Jews who held out against the Romans after the fall of Jerusalem: “Long since, my brave men, we determined neither to serve the Romans nor any other save God, for He alone is man’s true and righteous Lord” (Josephus *War* vii. 8. 6 [323]; Loeb ed., vol. 3, p. 595).

34. Verily. See on Matt. 5:18; John 1:51.

Committeth sin. That is, according to the Greek, habitually (see on 1 John 3:9).

Servant. Gr. *doulos*, “one bound,” “a slave.” In the Bible the *douloi* are frequently contrasted with the free (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 6:8; Col. 3:11; Rev. 19:18). Onesimus, the escaped slave, is called a *doulos*, and Paul recommends that he be treated above a *doulos* (Philemon 16). The phrase “in bondage” (John 8:33) is from *douleuō*, which expresses the verbal idea of the noun *doulos*. The connection between vs. 33, 34 is thus clearly seen in the Greek. The Jews said, “We were never in bondage”; Jesus replied, “He that committeth sin is in bondage to sin.”

The figure of slavery to sin is also employed by Paul (Rom. 6:16–20).

35. The servant. Rather, “the slave” (see on v. 34). The slave’s tenure is not permanent. He may at any time displease his master and be expelled. Not so the son. His master’s blood courses in his veins. He is the heir and remains in the household as long as he lives. The Jews boasted of their descent from Abraham (see on v. 33). But Abraham had two sons, the one of a bondwoman and the other of the freewoman (see the allegory of Gal. 4). The Jews were slaves (see on John 8:34), and hence in danger of being rejected. But the Son could emancipate them by altering their status (see on chs. 3:3, 4; 8:36).

36. Free indeed. The Jews considered themselves to be the free sons of Abraham and boasted of their liberty (see on v. 33). They were unwilling to acknowledge their bondage, whether literal or spiritual. But their boasted freedom was spurious. Jesus had come to offer them genuine freedom (Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 5:1). He alone is free who is free from sin. Those who desire this freedom must apply to the Lord Jesus Christ, and must comply with the conditions. It is His peculiar office and privilege to enfranchise all who accept Him. Only through spiritual freedom could the nation attain to the political freedom they so ardently desired (see Vol. IV, pp. 30-32).

37. Abraham’s seed. The fact of literal descent could not be disputed (cf. v. 33).

Kill me. See ch. 7:1, 19, 25; etc. The fact that the Jews were plotting murder was evidence that they were slaves of sin (see on John 8:34; cf. Rom. 6:16).

My word hath no place. Compare the phrase “continue in my word” (v. 31). The Jews were unwilling to accept the message of Jesus, a message that would have freed them from the slavery of sin (see on v. 32).

38. With my Father. For a discussion of the close association of Christ with the Father see on chs. 1:1; 5:19.

Do. That is, according to the Greek, habitually. Children naturally reflect the characteristics, and obey the dictates of, their father.

Your father. Jesus later identifies him as the devil (v. 44), the very antithesis of the Father of infinite love.

39. Abraham is our father. This they had already asserted (see on v. 33). Perhaps they saw the implication of Jesus’ statement in v. 38 and hoped to counter it. Jesus proceeded to show that mere physical descent from the patriarch was no advantage. God values character qualifications. Compare the arguments of Paul in Rom. 2:28, 29; 9:6, 7.

Works of Abraham. The Jews were the physical seed of Abraham, but they were not his spiritual children. A true child bears the moral impress of the father. The Mishnah describes the disciples of Abraham thus: “The disciples of Abraham, our father, [possess]

a good eye, an humble spirit and a lowly soul” (*Aboth* 5. 19, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 72).

40. Kill me. See v. 37; cf. ch. 7:1, 25.

A man. Gr. *anthrōpos*, here used in the sense of a person.

Truth. See on v. 32. Jesus’ only “crime” was that He had come to tell the truth, which He had received from God.

This did not Abraham. Abraham was responsive to the divine voice. When asked to leave his kindred and his father’s house he “obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went” (Heb. 11:8; cf. Gen. 12:1). His persistent walk of faith won for him the title, “father of all them that believe” (Rom. 4:11). When Christ visited Abraham in the plains of Mamre, Abraham did not go about to kill Him, but received Him as an honored guest (Gen. 18:1–5).

41. Your father. Jesus had already informed the Jews that His Father was not their father (v. 38), but had not yet identified their father as the devil (see v. 44). They probably saw the implication and hastened to deny it.

Of fornication. There is doubtless a taunt here at the supposed circumstances of Jesus’ birth, the implication being that Jesus was born of fornication.

Even God. If it was spiritual ancestry that Jesus was referring to, then the Jews claimed as much as did Jesus. The idea that God was the father of Israel was not new (see Deut. 32:6; Isa. 64:8; etc.).

42. If God were your Father. The Jews were clearly not the children of God. If they were, they would accept the One whom God had sent. This principle is affirmed in 1 John 5:1, 2.

Of myself. This is an oft-repeated theme in the Gospel of John. Jesus denies that there is any self-seeking on His part (see ch. 7:16, 18; etc.).

43. Because ye cannot hear. Perhaps meaning, “because you cannot bear to hear” (RSV), or “because ye will not listen” (Robertson). The result was misunderstanding and misconstruction of the speech of Jesus. If they were the true children of the heavenly Father, they would understand the language of home.

44. The devil. Literally, “the slanderer” (see on Matt. 4:1).

Lusts. Gr. *epithumiai*, “desires,” whether good (Luke 22:15; Phil. 1:23), or, more often, evil (Rom. 1:24; 6:12; 7:7, 8; etc.). Related to *epithumia* is the verb *epithumeō*, the word rendered “covet” in the tenth commandment as quoted by Paul in Rom. 7:7; 13:9. The “lusts of your father” are the evil desires that characterize him, or the desires he instills in those who do his bidding.

Ye will do. Literally, “you wish to do,” or “you wish to practice.”

From the beginning. This has often been considered an allusion to the first recorded murder, that of Abel (Gen. 4:1–8). But the spirit of murder goes back to the inception of sin. By his rebellion Lucifer brought the death sentence upon himself and upon the angels who joined him in his revolt (2 Peter 2:4). When he led our first parents into sin he brought death upon them and upon the entire human family (Rom. 5:12). Their desire to kill Jesus was evidence of the close affinity of the Jews with the archmurderer.

Abode not. A reference to the original fall of Lucifer (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4; see on Isa. 14:12–14; Eze. 28:12–14).

In the truth. For a definition of truth see on v. 32.

No truth. That is, no truthfulness. Truth and Satan have nothing in common.

Of his own. Literally, “out of his own [things],” that is, out of the things of his essential nature. It is his nature to lie. Jesus, on the other hand, spoke not of Himself, but spoke the truth He had heard from His Father (v. 38).

He is a liar. His career of falsehood began in heaven, where he first misrepresented the character and purposes of God before the angels. By his insinuations and lies in the Garden of Eden he brought about the fall of our first parents (see on Gen. 3:4).

The Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 89b, Soncino ed., p. 596) contains the legend that before the sacrifice of Isaac, Satan attempted to instill doubts in the mind of Abraham concerning God, and that Abraham repulsed him with the words, “It is the penalty of a liar, that should he even tell the truth, he is not listened to.”

Father of it. According to the Greek this phrase may mean either the father of the liar or the father of the lie. Either correctly designates the great originator of falsehood. As a liar Satan was expelled from heaven and will never regain residence there. Neither will his children, for “without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” (Rev. 22:15).

45. Because I. In the Greek the “I” stands in the emphatic position. Jesus is setting Himself up by way of contrast. The Jews greedily believed the lies perpetrated by the archdeceiver. It was he who had suggested to them their false concepts of the Messiah (see on Luke 4:19). These they readily accepted for these false ideas flattered their personal ambitions. The truth that Jesus brought to them was unpalatable to their sin-loving hearts, so they rejected it. Compare John 3:19.

46. Convinceth. Gr. *elegchō*, “to convict,” “to reprove,” here, the former. The word is translated “convict” in v. 9, and would suitably be so translated in ch. 16:8, where the KJV renders it “reprove” (see comments there). Jesus appeals to the knowledge of the Jews concerning His sinless life. He Himself had given testimony of His entire conformity to the Father’s will (ch. 8:29). Despite all the spying of the religious leaders, not one stain of sin had been detected. Their silence upon this occasion confirmed His testimony. Since they tacitly admitted the purity of Jesus’ life, the irrationality of their course lay effectively exposed.

On the absolute sinlessness of Jesus see 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 Peter 1:19; 2:22; 1 John 3:5.

47. Of God. Compare John 1:13; 1 John 3:10; 4:6.

Heareth. The inclination to heed God’s word is a true index to the condition of the heart. Someone has remarked, “There is no surer mark of an unsanctified nature than dislike for God’s word.”

48. Say we not well? That is, “Are we not right in saying?”

Samaritan. For the attitude of the Jews toward the Samaritans see ch. 4:9.

Devil. An old charge (see Matt. 12:24; John 7:20; 10:20).

49. I have not a devil. Jesus passes by the charge, “Thou art a Samaritan,” perhaps because it was not worthy of being noticed. To be a Samaritan was in actuality no dishonor; with God there is no respect of persons (Rom. 2:11). “There is neither Jew nor Greek” (Gal. 3:28), “but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:35). In parable from Jesus later represented a Samaritan as a type of neighborly love (Luke 10:33–37). He also noted that of the ten lepers who

were cleansed, the one who returned to give thanks was a Samaritan (Luke 17:16). See on Matt. 12:22–30.

The charge that He had a devil Jesus denied. He told the disputatious Jews that, instead, He was bringing honor to His Father, while they, in turn, were insulting Him.

50. *Mine own glory.* Compare chs. 5:41; 7:18; 8:54.

One that seeketh. That is, God. He it is who seeks the honor of the Son (v. 54).

Judgeth. The Father is the one who will judge in the present controversy, vindicating His Son and condemning His adversaries.

51. *Verily, verily.* See on Matt. 5:18; John 1:51.

Never see death. The thought of this verse is doubtless connected with that of the preceding. Jesus had introduced the subject of His Father's judgment. In that judgment those who persevere in the word of Christ will be granted eternal life. The death here referred to is not physical death, which comes to the righteous and wicked alike, but the second death, which will ultimately annihilate the wicked (Rev. 20:6, 14, 15). The opposite of the second death is eternal life (John 3:16), which is represented in the Scriptures as being granted to the believer at the moment he accepts his Lord (1 John 3:14; 5:11, 12; cf. DA 388). This gift the overcomer never loses. Physical dissolution at death and the state of unconsciousness between death and the resurrection do not deprive him of the gift. His life continues to be "hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3) to be translated into glorious immortality on the resurrection morn.

52. *Now we know.* They felt that now they had convincing evidence that Jesus was under the control of a demon. See on Matt. 12:24.

Abraham is dead. Literally, "Abraham died." Later Jewish tradition named nine who entered Paradise without seeing death, but Abraham was not on the list. However, the Jews misunderstood Jesus' statement. They thought that Jesus spoke of physical death when He said, "he shall never see death" (v. 51). Certainly Abraham should then have been spared the ravages of death, for Jesus Himself had witnessed to his righteousness (vs. 39, 40).

Taste of death. A common figure of speech (Matt. 16:28; Heb. 2:9). Its essential meaning is not different from the phrase "see death" (John 8:51), another figure employed by Jesus. Hence the Jews were not actually misquoting Jesus, as might appear.

53. *Art thou greater?* The Greek construction indicates that a negative answer is expected. They probably suspected that Jesus would set forth the claim that He was the Messiah (cf. ch. 5:18). In later tradition the Jews had no objection to the thought that the Messiah would be greater than Abraham (Midrash Ps. 18, sec. 29 [79a], Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 1, p. 980), and such an objection may not now have existed. However, they were not willing to grant that Jesus was the true Messiah. He did not meet their expectations regarding the role of the Messiah. Compare the Samaritan woman's question, "Art thou greater than our father Jacob?" (ch. 4:12).

54. *Honour myself.* The Jews had asked, "Whom makest thou thyself?" The implication of the question was that Jesus lacked valid credentials. Yet He had repeatedly denied that He was a self-appointed envoy (chs. 7:28; 8:28, 38, 42, 50), and now once more asserts that His honor came from His Father.

Whom ye say. See v. 41.

55. Not known him. If they had known God, they would have kept His commandments (1 John 2:4). They would have accepted Jesus, for He came from God (John 8:42).

I know him. See on ch. 1:18; cf. ch. 8:42.

A liar like unto you. They professed to know God, and yet by their deeds they denied Him (see 1 John 2:4).

56. To see my day. An ancient Jewish tradition taught that in connection with the experience recorded in Gen. 15:9–21, Abraham received a revelation of the future. The Apocryphal book 4 Esdras (2 Esdras in English versions) contains the following: “Thou didst choose thee one from among them whose name was Abraham: him thou didst love, and unto him only didst thou reveal the end of the times secretly by night” (3:14, R. H. Charles ed.).

He saw it, and was glad. The Jews resent His applying Abraham’s vision of the future to Himself. Abraham had earnestly longed to see the promised Saviour, and when the revelation was given to him he rejoiced. By contrast the Jews, whose privilege it was to see the days of the Messiah in reality, were disturbed and angry.

57. Fifty years old. According to Num. 4:3 the sons of Kohath were to render service between the ages of 30 and 50. The age of 50 was therefore in a sense a retirement age. Beyond that, obligatory service ceased, but they could assist in the tabernacle according to their ability (Num. 8:25, 26). The Jews were doubtless speaking in round numbers. Jesus was actually only about 33 years old (see p. 242; see on Luke 3:23).

58. Verily. See on Matt. 5:18. The statement to follow was most solemn, and fraught with eternal significance.

Before Abraham was. Rather, “before Abraham came into existence.” The verb is *ginomai* as in ch. 1:6 and not *eimi* as later in this verse (see on ch. 1:1). The same combination of verbs occurs in the LXX of Ps. 90:2, “Before the mountains were brought forth [*ginomai*] ... from everlasting to everlasting thou art [*eimi*] God.” See on John 1:1.

I am. Gr. *egō eimi*, here used in its absolute sense and understood by the Jews as a claim to divinity (see on v. 24). For a discussion of this title of Deity see Vol. I, pp. 170–173.

59. Took they up stones. The question as to where stones could be obtained in the Temple may find its answer in the fact that the Temple of Herod was still in the process of building. A few months later the Jews made another attempt to stone Jesus because He claimed divinity (ch. 10:30–33).

Went out. His hour had not yet come (see on ch. 7:6).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 MH 86; 2T 508

1–5DA 460

1–11DA 460–462

4, 5 MH 87

6–11DA 461

7 DA 462; MH 88, 89; 3T 105; 4T 238, 326; 5T 35, 53; 7T 279

10, 11 MH 88

11 MH 89; MM 28; 7T 96; 9T 164

12 CT 28, 512; CSW 175; DA 463, 464, 465; FE 47, 128; GC 312, 476; LS 39; MH 419;
 MM 203; MYP 63, 169; PP 367; TM 178, 211, 332; 1T 31, 406; 4T 190, 231; 7T 272; 9T
 141
 12–59DA 463–475
 16 CS 143
 25 DA 465
 28 DA 21
 28, 29 DA 465; MH 488
 29 DA 468, 685; GC 469; MB 15; MH 426; PP 372; 8T 208, 289
 31 5T 433
 31–34DA 466
 32 DA 258; 8T 152, 251
 33 COL 268
 36–40DA 466
 39 PP 154
 39, 40 COL 268
 41, 42 DA 467
 44 DA 739; Ev 597, 598; EW 90, 228, 264; GC 502; PP 337; TM 365; 4T 623; 5T 137
 44–46DA 467
 46 DA 287
 47 DA 468; 5T 433, 694, 696
 48 COL 381; MB 25
 50 DA 21
 51, 52 DA 787
 56 DA 468; PK 683; PP 154
 57, 58 DA 469
 59 DA 470; EW 159

CHAPTER 9

1 *The man that was born blind restored to sight. 8 He is brought to the Pharisees. 13 They are offended at it, and excommunicate him: 35 but he is received of Jesus, and confesseth him. 39 Who they are whom Christ enlighteneth.*

1. Jesus passed by. [*The Man Born Blind*, John 9:1–41. See Early Peraean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] For the chronological setting of this event see on Matt. 19:1. The miracle of healing took place on the Sabbath day (John 9:14), probably the Sabbath following the Feast of Tabernacles with which the events of chs. 7 and 8 were connected (see on chs. 7:2; 8:2). However, it is possible that several months elapsed between the sermon of ch. 8 and the miracle. If so, the incident took place in connection with the visit of Jesus to Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication a few months later (see on ch. 10:22).

Blind from his birth. Blindness from various causes, especially trachoma, is still common in the East. Of the miracles mentioned in the Gospels, concerning this one only is it noted that the malady had existed from birth.

2. Who did sin? The Jews taught that the sufferings of this life were divine punishment for sin. According to the Talmud, “There is no death without sin, and there is no suffering without iniquity” (*Shabbath* 55a, Soncino ed., p. 255). “A sick man does not

recover from his sickness until all his sins are forgiven him” (*Nedarim* 41a, Soncino ed., p. 130). The rabbis further taught that God was careful that sin met its punishment according to the rule, measure for measure. Several examples of the rule are given in the Mishnah: “In the measure with which a man measures it is meted out to him.” “Samson went after [the desire of] his eyes; therefore the Philistines put out his eyes. ... Absalom gloried in his hair; therefore he was hanged by his hair. And because he cohabited with the ten concubines of his father, therefore he was stabbed with ten lances. ... And because he stole three hearts, the heart of his father, the heart of the court of justice, and the heart of Israel, ... therefore three darts were thrust through him” (*Sotah* 1. 7, 8, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, pp. 37, 41). The Jews held that every sin had its peculiar punishment, and believed it possible in certain cases, at least, to determine the guilt of a man by the nature of his suffering. After the destruction of the Temple and the end of the Sanhedrin, and with it the end of Jewish executions, Rabbi Joseph taught that God visited natural calamities upon those deserving death: “He who would have been sentenced to stoning, either falls down from the roof or a wild beast treads him down. He who would have been sentenced to burning, either falls into a fire or a serpent bites him. He who would have been sentenced to decapitation, is either delivered to the government or robbers come upon him. He who would have been sentenced to strangulation, is either drowned in the river or dies from suffocation” (Talmud *Kethuboth* 30a, 30b, Soncino ed., p. 167).

Although these statements are of a date later than the time of Jesus, they doubtless reflect the thinking of the Jews in His time. This is evident from the question of the disciples on this occasion, also from the question of Jesus on this subject in Luke 13:2, 4.

It should be noted that even though the above represents the overwhelming opinion, the Jews did make provision for what they called the chastisement of love. This they believed God sent for testing and purification. Such chastisements, they held, would never interfere with the study of the Torah or with prayer. He who willingly submitted to these chastisements would be richly rewarded. However, they considered these chastisements of love as exceptions to the general rule, where there is suffering there is also guilt.

This man. If this man was blind as the result of his own sin, then he must have sinned before he was born, inasmuch as his blindness had existed from birth. There are a few hints in rabbinical literature to the effect that the Jews considered prenatal sinning on the part of the child at least a possibility. For example, Midrash Rabbah, on Gen. 25:22 (Soncino ed., pp. 559, 560), charges that Esau committed sin both prior to and at the time of his birth. However, the predominant view of the Jews was that a child could not be guilty of any misdemeanor before birth. Midrash Rabbah, on Lev. 22:27 (Soncino ed., p. 350), tells the story of a mother who brought her son to the judge because of some offense. When she observed the judge condemning others to lashing she began to fear that if she would disclose the offense of her son the judge would kill him. When she turned she said nothing of the offense but simply charged that before birth her son had kicked [like a refractory beast]. The judge inquired. Has he done anything else? She answered No. He said, That is no offense at all. The answer of the judge reflects the general teaching of the Jews with regard to supposed prenatal sin on the part of the child.

The disciples had doubtless heard of the hairsplitting arguments of the rabbis on this perplexing question and were anxious to hear what Jesus had to say on the matter.

His parents. This part of the disciples' question had at least some scriptural basis, for the law declares that the Lord visits "the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate" Him (Ex. 20:5). Children often do suffer the consequences of their parents' wrongdoing, but they are not punished for the parents' guilt (see on Eze. 18:1, 2; cf. PP 306).

Some of the rabbis taught that epilepsy, lameness, dumbness, and deafness came as the result of the transgression of the most trivial traditional rules (see Talmud *Pesaḥim* 112b, Soncino ed., p. 579; *Gittin* 70a, Soncino ed., p. 333; *Nedarim* 20a, 20b, Soncino ed., pp. 57, 58).

They had received their erroneous philosophy of suffering from Satan, for he, "the author of sin and all its results, had led men to look upon disease and death as proceeding from God,—as punishment arbitrarily inflicted on account of sin" (DA 471). They had not grasped the lesson from the book of Job which showed that "suffering is inflicted by Satan, and is overruled by God for purposes of mercy" (DA 471; see on Ps. 38:3).

3. Neither hath. Such a teaching went directly contrary to the view popularly held by the Jews (see on v. 2).

Made manifest. This statement has often been understood—or, more correctly, misunderstood—as teaching that blindness had been visited upon an innocent infant in order that 38 years later God might reveal His might power. The English translation tends to support this observation. However, the conjunction "that" (Gr. *hina*), which introduces the clause, though it often expresses purpose, may also, and frequently does, introduce a consecutive clause or clause of result. Examples of the latter usage are the following:

Luke 9:45; Gal. 5:17; 1 Thess. 5:4; 1 John 1:9; see on Matt. 1:22. If the *hina* in John 9:3 is interpreted as expressing result, then the problem posed by this verse seems to be eliminated, and the verse may be paraphrased as follows: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but as a result of his suffering the works of God will be made manifest in him." Thus Jesus "did not explain the cause of man's affliction, but told them [the Jews] what would be the result" (DA 471). For those who love Him, God works all things, including the afflictions sent by the enemy, for good (Rom. 8:28). In the providence of God the inflictions of the enemy are overruled for our good.

4. I must work. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between this reading and "we must work." The latter emphasizes the association of the disciples with Jesus in His labors.

That sent me. A frequently occurring Johannine phrase (see chs. 4:34; 5:24; 6:38; etc.; see on ch. 3:17).

While it is day. That is, the time for labor (Ps. 104:23). The phrase suggests urgency. A similar figure is found in the Mishnah, where Rabbi Tarfon, commenting on the daytime of life, says, "The day is short, and the work [to be performed] is much; and the workmen are indolent, but the reward is much; and the master of the house is insistent" (*Aboth* 2. 15, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 24).

The night cometh. For Jesus the night was not far away (see ch. 7:33). His brief “day” was the time of His ministry here on earth; the arrival of His night, the time when He would depart out of this world (see ch. 9:5).

5. As long as. This does not mean that Jesus was the light of the world only during the time of His historic sojourn upon earth, for He is still the light of the world. He referred particularly to His role as the “light” during the time He walked visibly among men. The Greek has no article before light, nor does it express separately the pronoun “I” as in the statement “I am the light of the world” (ch. 8:12). For the significance of the figure see on ch. 1:4, 5; cf. DA 464, 465.

6. Spat on the ground. The ancients believed that saliva contained healing properties (see, for example, Talmud *Baba Bathra* 126b, Soncino ed., p. 526). However, a supposed healing virtue in saliva was not the reason Jesus made use of the agency, unless simply to strengthen the man’s faith. In two other miracles the use of saliva is mentioned (see on Mark 7:33; cf. ch. 8:23).

The preparation of the clay doubtless came within the restrictions of rabbinical laws with regard to the Sabbath (see ch. 9:14; see on chs. 5:10, 16; 7:22–24). Kneading was specifically forbidden (see Mishnah *Shabbath* 7. 2, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 349). For example, men were permitted to pour water on bran in preparation as feed for animals, but they were not permitted to “mix it” (Mishnah *Shabbath* 24. 3, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 794). See on chs. 5:16; 9:16.

Anointed the eyes. Here also (see above under “Spat on the ground”) Jesus transgressed rabbinical tradition, which permitted only such anointing as was normally conducted on other days. Any unusual anointing was forbidden. For example, the ancients used vinegar for the relief of toothache. A man with a pain in his teeth could not suck vinegar through them on the Sabbath, but he could take vinegar in the usual fashion at mealtime and obtain relief in that way (Mishnah *Shabbath* 14.4, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 539).

7. Siloam. A pool in the southern part of Jerusalem (see on Isa. 8:6; see Jerusalem in Time of Christ; Josephus *War* v. 4. 1, 2 [136–141]; 9. 4 [409–411]).

By interpretation, Sent. Siloam is a transliteration through the Greek of the Heb. *Shiloach*, which comes from the verb *shalach*, “to send.” It was a characteristic of John to supply the meaning of Hebrew proper names for Greek readers (see ch. 1:38, 42). The command to wash in the pool was not because of any healing power in the water itself, but was doubtless because Jesus desired to test the man’s faith. Compare 2 Kings 5:10.

8. That he was blind. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 146) the reading “that he was a beggar.”

Is not this he? The construction in the Greek shows that a positive answer is expected. They were sure it was he.

Sat and begged. Rather, “used to sit and beg.” It was his custom. The Midrash cites several formulas employed by beggars when asking for gifts: “Benefit yourself through me” (Rabbah, on Lev. 25:25, Soncino ed., p. 432), “Give me alms” (*ibid.* [131a]). The Talmud has the following: “‘Master,’ she said to him, ‘feed me’” (*Kethuboth* 66b, Soncino ed., p. 405).

9. He is like him. The appearance of the man was doubtless greatly changed. His opened eyes now lighted up his whole face. Considerable excitement was aroused concerning his identity, but the man himself settled the question, affirming, "I am he."

10. How? A perfectly natural question. The neighbors apparently do not challenge the validity of the miracle, as the leaders did later (v. 18).

11. Called Jesus. Jesus had apparently identified Himself only by name. The blind man did not know that He was the Messiah (see vs. 35–38). He had never seen Jesus, for when he went to wash in the Pool of Siloam, in the southern part of Jerusalem, he was still blind.

12. Where is he? The desire to see the miracle worker was natural. Compare ch. 7:11.

13. They brought. Literally, "they are bringing." John relates the narrative with dramatic vividness. The reason why the people brought the healed man to the Pharisees is not stated. Perhaps the fact that the healing was a breach of the traditional Sabbath laws (see on v. 6) led them to the conclusion that the case required the attention of the Pharisees.

14. The sabbath day. Inasmuch as the case of the blind man was not an emergency, that is, life was not in danger, the healing Jesus performed was a violation of Jewish traditional law (see on ch. 7:22–24). These laws also forbade the mixing of the clay and the anointing of the eyes (see on ch. 9:6).

The Jews, the would-be champions of the law, completely mistook the intention and purpose of the Sabbath (see on Mark 2:27, 28). They did not sense that the day was sanctified for the good of man, physically, mentally, and spiritually. Its sanctification was never intended to prevent works of necessity and mercy, consistent with the creative energy it commemorates (see on Gen. 2:1–3). To heal the sick man was no breach of the divine law of the Sabbath. In finding fault with our Lord for such a breach the Jews showed their ignorance of a law they were supposed to observe.

Seven miracles in all are recorded as having taken place on the Sabbath (see Nos. 3, 5, 6, 9, 27, 28, 29, on pp. 205-207).

15. The Pharisees also. These religious leaders inquire about the facts of the case. They do not deny the miracle. The healed man gives a brief, but doubtless courteous, reply.

16. Of God. The Pharisees granted the truth of the miracle, but implied that the power by which it was wrought was of the evil one (see on Matt. 12:24).

Keepeth not the sabbath. The healing was considered illegal because the case was chronic and required no immediate attention. Life was not in danger (see on v. 14). The preparation of the clay and the anointing of the eyes were also considered to be breaches of the Sabbath laws (see on v. 6).

Others said. There were men among the Pharisees of a better spirit and attitude, such as Nicodemus (chs. 3:1–21; 7:50, 51) and Joseph (see on Matt. 27:57).

A sinner. The Jews taught that God wrought miracles only for those who were worthy. The Talmud contains the following interesting discussion: "Said R. Papa to Abaye: How is it that for the former generations miracles were performed and for us, miracles are not performed? ... yet when Rab[bi] Judah drew off one shoe [in preparation for fasting], rain used to come, whereas we torment ourselves and cry loudly, and no notice is taken of us! He replied: The former generations used to be ready to sacrifice

their lives for the sanctity of [God's] name; we do not sacrifice their lives for the sanctity of [God's] name" (*Berakoth* 20a, Soncino ed., pp. 119, 120). Compare Luke 7:4.

17. What sayest thou? Emphasis is upon the "thou." The Pharisees disagreed among themselves, and this question may have been designed to conceal their division.

That he hath opened. The connection between this clause and the preceding is better shown by rendering the conjunction translated "that" as "in that," or "since" (RSV). The thought of the Greek runs as follows: "And you, what do you say of him since it is your eyes he has opened?"

He is a prophet. In Greek the word "prophet" lacks the article. The healed man is not acknowledging Jesus to be "that prophet," as had the multitudes fed with the loaves and fishes (see on ch. 6:14; cf. ch. 1:21). But he recognizes that Jesus is more than an ordinary man. He is convinced that the power that brought healing is of God, and that the person who exercised it is a messenger from God. His testimony contradicted that of the Pharisees who declared, "This man is not of God" (ch. 9:16).

18. Did not believe. Up to this point the miracle had remained unchallenged. But the Jews were confronted with a seeming contradiction of circumstances—how could a man with such extraordinary powers of healing, apparently derived from God, break the Sabbath? Perhaps the miracle was not genuine. They were groping for a solution and decided to question the parents.

19. Is this your son? There are three questions, here perhaps phrased so as to confuse the parents: Is this your son? Do you say that he was born blind? How do you account for the fact that he now sees?

20. He was born blind. This is the point the Jews were hoping could be proved untrue. Their scheme to invalidate the miracle had failed.

21. We know not. This was an untruth, or at least an evasion of the truth. They seem not to have been present at the time of the anointing of the man's eyes or when he washed at the pool, and thus could not testify as eyewitnesses. But with their neighbors, they had heard of the cure and knew of the circumstances (see v. 22).

He is of age. The Jews counted maturity from 13 years and one day in the case of boys and one year earlier for girls. The healed man was thus more than 13 years old, but how much older is a matter of conjecture. In v. 1 he is identified simply as a "man" (Gr. *anthrōpos*), a member of the human family.

22. Feared the Jews. This observation proves that the parents were familiar with the circumstances of the cure (see on v. 21). Fear of excommunication led them to cover up the truth.

He was Christ. Christ means Messiah (see on Matt. 1:1; cf. John 1:41). To say that Jesus was the Christ was to confess the belief that He was the Messiah of prophecy. Many of the Jews (see John 7:41) and even of the rulers (ch. 7:50, 51 see on ch. 9:16) were under conviction that He was indeed the Sent of God.

Put out of the synagogue. This doubtless refers to the 30-day ban imposed by the Jews for certain offenses such as derogatory speech against those in authority (see Mishnah *'Eduyyoth* 5. 6, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, pp. 34, 35; Talmud *Nedarim* 50b, Soncino ed., p. 158; *Mo'ed, Qatan* 16a, Soncino ed., p. 98; *Kiddushin* 70a, Soncino ed., pp. 354, 355). For a discussion of the ban see Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 4, pp. 293-333.

23. Of age. See on v. 21.

24. Give God the praise. This was a technical formula, one that required the person so addressed to take action appropriate to the circumstances that would bring honor to God. The context indicates the type of action expected. In the case of Achan the formula demanded a confession of guilt (Joshua 7:19). Here the demand implied that the healed man's conduct and confession had not brought honor to God. The Jews sought to elicit the declaration that it was not Jesus who had healed him, but God.

A sinner. That is, because, according to them, He had broken the Sabbath (see on v. 14).

25. I know not. He was not so certain as the Jews. They claimed to "know" (v. 24). However, they had not supplied sufficient evidence, nor had they solved the dilemma of how a man that was a sinner could do such miracles (v. 16).

One thing I know. The healed man revealed remarkable shrewdness. He refused to quibble about whether Jesus was a sinner. He based his testimony upon indisputable evidence.

26. What did he? This further cross-examination was doubtless designed to confuse the healed man. They were looking for some defect or contradiction in his testimony.

27. Did not hear. That is, did not accept my testimony.

Be his disciples. The construction in Greek shows that a negative answer is expected: "It isn't that you also want to be His disciples, is it?" The Holy Spirit enabled the uneducated man to make this bold defense (see on Matt. 10:19).

28. Moses' disciples. Although not a common designation, the expression is found in the Talmud in a reference to Pharisaic scholars (*Yoma* 4a, Soncino ed., p. 12). The disciples of Jesus are contrasted with the disciples of Moses. A similar contrast is made in the Mishnah between the disciples of Abraham and the disciples of Balaam, as the Christians are designated (*Aboth* 5. 19, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, pp. 72, 73).

29. God spake unto Moses. This clause recurs frequently in the OT (Lev. 4:1; 6:1; 8:1; etc.; cf. Ex. 33:11; Heb. 1:1).

We know not. Some of the people claimed to know (ch. 7:27). Jesus had plainly informed the Jews that He had come from God (ch. 8:42), but they chose not to believe His testimony.

30. A marvellous thing. Literally, "the marvelous thing." These religious leaders should have been familiar with the origin and claims of so notable a miracle worker as Jesus. He had been active among them for over three years. Evidence after evidence had been given to inspire faith, but the Jews turned against the evidence of their senses. They chose willful ignorance, and their dramatic exposure on this occasion was fully merited.

31. God heareth not sinners. This statement was in agreement with the viewpoint of at least one division of the Pharisees (see on v. 16). The reasoning of the healed man was irrefutable. If, as some of the Pharisees admitted, God works miracles only for those who are worthy, then they must agree that the miracle worker was of God, especially in view of the unusual character of the miracle (v. 32).

The statement, "God heareth not sinners," is, of course, true of the willful, unrepentant sinner. But God always hears the prayer of the penitent who pleads for mercy and pardon (see on Luke 18:13). He also frequently hears the prayers of those who have departed from the path of right; He does not immediately abandon those who stray. He often continues His blessings as an inducement to return. Because of this fact the

converse of the above statement is not always true. The fact that God answers a man's prayer is not necessarily evidence that He approves of that man's entire conduct. The one who receives marked answers to prayer should not exult in a supposed evidence of righteousness and acceptance; he should search his heart diligently that he might the more fully conform to the divine pattern. He must not interpret the blessing of God as sanctioning his entire course of action. Any willful persistence in known sin will eventually lead to an irrevocable separation between the sinner and God (Rev. 22:11).

Doeth his will. Compare 1 John 3:22; SC 95.

32. Since the world began. Literally, "from the age," an expression equivalent to "never." Historical records revealed no instance of a case of congenital blindness being healed.

33. He could do nothing. This point some of the Pharisees themselves had raised (v. 16). Nicodemus had confessed the same (ch. 3:2). The man had scored a complete victory. His logic was irrefutable. The Pharisees were baffled. Having nothing with which to answer his arguments, they resorted to invective.

34. Born in sins. They cast in his teeth the calamity of his birth as a mark of special sin, perhaps implying prenatal sin (see on v. 2).

Cast him out. Perhaps in fulfillment of the threat mentioned in v. 22 (see comments there).

35. When he had found him. The lost sheep the shepherds of Israel had thrust out is found by the Good Shepherd (John 10:11; see on Luke 15:1–7). Jesus is never far from those susceptible to divine influences (Rom. 10:8, 9).

Son of God. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between this and "son of man." The former has in its favor the fact that the expression was common in confessions of faith (see John 1:49; 11:27; cf. Matt. 16:16; John 1:34; 20:31). It is more consonant with the testimony the healed man had delivered before the Pharisees (John 9:30–33). The humanity of Jesus, emphasized in the title "Son of man" (see on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10), was not so much the point at issue here.

36. Who is he? The healed man had not seen Jesus before. When the Lord dismissed him to wash in the Pool of Siloam the man was still blind. Having been blind from birth, he had never seen a human face before this day. How thrilled he must have been to gaze upon the countenances of his parents and acquaintances! Now for the first time he beheld the lovely face of Jesus. What a contrast to the scowling faces of the hypocritical Pharisees! The voice doubtless identified Jesus as the one who had healed him.

Lord. Gr. *kurios*, here perhaps simply a title of respect equivalent to "sir."

That I might believe. He was ready to believe on the Messiah, and felt that this man whom he had acknowledged as a prophet (v. 17) could tell him who the Messiah was.

37. Thou hast both seen him. The words do not refer to a previous meeting but to the present moment. He saw in Jesus one whom those who had had the use of their sight throughout life were unable to see. None are more blind than those unwilling to see! Contrast the attitude of the Jews in ch. 6:36.

38. Lord. Gr. *kurios*, now perhaps expressed in reverence and with its divine implications (see on v. 36).

Worshipped. As a dramatic sequel to the narrative the man whose physical sight was restored now sees Jesus, the true light of the world. He not only rejoices in the light of the body but sees also with the eyes of his soul.

39. Judgment. Gr. *krima*, not the act of judging, which is *krisis*, but the result of judging, in this case a sifting or separation. This verse is thus not a contradiction of ch. 3:17 (cf. ch. 8:15). The ultimate purpose of the first advent was not to judge the world, but to save the world (cf. Luke 19:10). However, the coming of Christ brought light into the darkness of men's hearts, and as men accepted or rejected that light, they pronounced judgment upon themselves. The light itself judged no man, but by it, those upon whom it shone were judged. This effect of the ministry of Christ had been predicted by Simeon (Luke 2:34, 35).

They which see not. This was true in a double sense. Christ healed the physically blind (Matt. 11:5); He also healed the spiritually blind. Both aspects of His mission were demonstrated in this miracle.

Might be made blind. Compare Isa. 6:9, 10; Mark 4:11, 12. When men love darkness rather than light (John 3:19) they finally lose their sense of spiritual perception. See Matt. 6:23; 1 John 2:11.

40. Are we blind also? The Greek construction anticipates a negative answer. The emphasis is upon the "we." Surely we, the religious leaders, are not blind! This was not a humble, anxious inquiry. The Pharisees doubtless saw the implication of the Lord's statement, and their words were uttered in scorn.

41. If ye were blind. That is, if there had been no opportunity to receive enlightenment. God judges men on the basis of the light they have received or might have received had they have received or might have received had they put forth the effort. See on ch. 15:22.

We see. There was a self-satisfaction with present knowledge that made it impossible for God to impart further knowledge. In rejecting Jesus the Jews rejected the channel through which Heaven was seeking to impart light.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-3DA 470

1-41DA 470-475

4 CT 416; DA 73; Ev 653; FE 201, 355, 359; GW 26; MH 195; ML 109; MM 333; 1T 694; 2T 401, 429; 4T 290, 377; 5T 353, 732; 6T 26, 198; 8T 178; 9T 26, 135, 200

5 DA 471; FE 177; 9T 171

6, 7 DA 70

7 DA 824; MH 233

8 DA 471

9, 11, 12 DA 472

14 DA 471

16-22DA 472

20-27EW 29

24-26DA 473

27-35DA 474

29 COL 79

³Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Jn 7:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

CHAPTER 10

1 *Christ is the door, and the good shepherd.* 19 *Divers opinions of him.* 24 *He proveth by his works that he is Christ the Son of God:* 39 *escapeth the Jews,* 40 *and went again beyond Jordan, where many believed on him.*

1. Verily. [*The Good Shepherd, John 10:1–21.*] See on Matt. 5:18; John 1:51. The present passage is a sequel to the healing of the blind man. The Pharisees, the recognized shepherds of Israel, had been unfaithful to their trust. They had cast out one from the fold who had expressed faith in the Messiah (John 9:34).

Sheepfold. Gr. *aulē*, a fenced-in, unroofed enclosure around a house, such as a courtyard (see on Matt. 26:58). This was sometimes used as an enclosure for sheep. Some scholars think that an uncovered enclosure in the country is referred to.

Thief. Gr. *kleptēs*, one who pilfers, or steals, as did Judas from the common purse (ch. 12:6). He may or may not employ violence. The idea of violence is more prominent in the word for “robber,” *lēstēs*, “one who plunders.” Such was Barabbas (ch. 18:40). The one who climbs up and over the wall of the enclosure by a way of his own making gives evidence that he is not the owner of the sheep. He may be a lone sneak thief carrying out his pilfering under cover of darkness, or he may be one of a gang of robbers who acquires property by violence. In any case he is a false shepherd.

By thieves and robbers Jesus was here designating especially the Pharisees, who claimed that they were the shepherds of Israel. They decreed who should be admitted to, and who should be expelled from, the fold. They “shut up the kingdom of heaven against men” and prevented those who sought to enter (Matt. 23:13). They compassed land and sea to make one proselyte, but when he was made he was twofold more a child of hell than they (Matt. 23:15). They took away the “key of knowledge” (Luke 11:52), and by their false interpretation of the Scriptures prevented men from recognizing and accepting the light.

Thieves and robbers are they who offer men any other means of salvation than that which has been provided through Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). The world has had, and will continue to have, its false messiahs. They do not enter by the door, Christ Jesus (John 10:9). Their claims, are false, and their carefully laid schemes will end in disaster.

2. The shepherd of the sheep. The true shepherd makes use of the door regularly provided for such an enclosure. He approaches it and leads out his sheep in broad daylight. The shepherd and the door are here distinguished. Later Jesus identified Himself as both the “door” (v. 9) and the “shepherd” (v. 14).

The figure of the shepherd is common in the Scriptures. Jehovah is presented as the divine Shepherd (Ps. 23; Isa. 40:11), and the unfaithful leaders of Israel as false shepherds (Eze. 34:1–10; cf. Jer. 23:14). In Eph. 4:11 the shepherds are spoken of as “pastors.”

3. Porter. Literally, “doorkeeper.” The feminine form is translated “her that kept the door” (ch. 18:16). The “porter” had charge of the flock during the night. In the morning the shepherd would return, call his sheep by name, and lead them out to pasture.

His own sheep. This phrase implies that there were other flocks besides his own that were sheltered there. Perhaps two or three flocks were housed in a single enclosure. Only

the sheep belonging to the shepherd would respond to his call. In Oriental lands today several flocks bivouac together at night, and in the morning each shepherd sets out in a different direction, calling out to his sheep.

Leadeth them out. Compare the language in Num. 27:17.

4. The sheep follow him. The Eastern shepherd lives very close to his flock. When the last sheep has been brought from the fold the shepherd places himself at the head of the flock and the sheep follow him, normally without hesitancy. The custom is referred to in the Midrash: “‘Thou didst lead Thy people like a flock’ [Ps. 77:20]. As a flock follows the shepherd so long as the shepherd leads it, so Israel, wherever Moses and Aaron made them journey, followed them” (Rabbah, on Num. 33:1, Soncino ed., p. 865). “What a lesson for pastors who seek to drive the church like cattle and fail. The true pastor leads in love, in words, in deeds” (Robertson).

5. A stranger. Particularly the thief and robber mentioned in v. 1, though, of course, anyone, even the shepherd of another flock.

Will they not follow. The negative is strongly expressed in the Greek. With the familiar tones of the shepherd’s voice the sheep associate protection, guidance, and pasture. The strange voice arouses, alarm.

6. Parable. Gr. *paroimia*, not *parabolē*, the usual word for “parable,” for a definition of which see p. 203. In the LXX *paroimia* and *parabolē* both translate the Heb. *mashal*, for a definition of which see Vol. III, p. 945. *Paroimia* occurs only five times in the NT: here, in John 16:25 (twice), 29, and in 2 Peter 2:22. In this last reference it clearly means “proverb,” but this definition does not suit the usages of the word in John. John uses the word to describe a symbolic or figurative, perhaps enigmatic, saying. “Allegory” or “figure” would be a close English equivalent. The discourse of John 10 differs from what is usually termed a parable in that it does not keep the outer facts wholly distinct from the ideal truths as is done in true parables.

They understood not. That is, they did not grasp the truth Jesus was illustrating. They understood the outer facts, of course, but the spiritual truths remained hidden from them. They were spiritually blind (ch. 9:40, 41).

7. Verily. See on Matt. 5:18; John 1:51.

Door of the sheep. That is, the door by which the sheep enter. Later Jesus identifies Himself also as the shepherd (v. 11). He now declares Himself to be the only true entrance to the spiritual fold (cf. v. 9). Access to the spiritual kingdom is possible only through Him. Those who hold forth any other means of access to God are false shepherds, false teachers. Such were the Pharisees to whom these words were addressed. They clung to the teaching that salvation comes to those who observe the torah (see on Matt. 19:16). They rejected Jesus, “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6), and tried to prevent others, such as the blind man of ch. 9, from accepting Him.

8. Thieves and robbers. See on v. 1.

9. I am the door. See on v. 7.

Any man. The call is universal. The door is open to all who desire to enter (cf. Rev. 22:17).

Go in and out. He shall enjoy all the privileges that true salvation offers—protection, safety, security, and peace, as well as spiritual food for his soul.

10. The thief. See on v. 1. The shepherd constantly goes in and out among his sheep. The thief visits the flock only on rare occasions and for purely selfish motives, and ruins the flock.

I. Emphatic in the Greek in contrast with the thief.

Life. *zōē*, here used in its theological sense, equivalent to eternal life. When Adam and Eve were created they possessed *zōē*, but lost it when they sinned. True, their physical life was extended, but they were no longer conditionally immortal (see on Gen. 2:17). Jesus came to restore the *zōē* that Adam had forfeited (see on John 8:51).

More abundantly. “Life” includes the physical, intellectual, and spiritual. Physical life is regarded as abundant in a body that is full of vigor and in perfect health. Jesus’ miracles of physical healing gave an abundant physical life to those whose life forces were ebbing. But physical restoration was by no means the complete fulfillment of Jesus’ mission. Man also has intellectual and spiritual life, which must also be made alive and abundant, for “man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord” (Deut. 8:3). Important as the physical and the intellectual aspects of a well-rounded life are, no life is fully complete unless the spiritual nature is nurtured.

11. The good shepherd. For the figure of the shepherd see on v. 2. The image of Jesus as the shepherd has impressed itself deeply upon the mind of the church, in its literature, art, music, and statuary. The adjective “good” (Gr. *kalos*) designates one who performs his service well, one who is extraordinary, outstanding, excellent. In 1 Tim. 4:6 *kalos* describes a good minister and in 2 Tim. 2:3 a good soldier.

The figure of Messiah as a shepherd was not new to the Jews. In the Psalms of Solomon, written about the middle of the 1st century B.C., the Anointed One is spoken of as follows: “(He will be) shepherding the flock of the Lord faithfully and righteously, and will suffer none among them to stumble in their pasture. He will lead them all aright, And there will be no pride among them that any among them should be oppressed” (17:45, 46).

Giveth his life. This is in contrast with the thief, who comes “to steal, and to kill, and to destroy” (v. 10). There is no OT example of a shepherd actually laying down his life for his sheep, although the hazards of the occupation are reflected in 1 Sam. 17:34–37. The self-sacrifice that leads the shepherd to hazard his life for a member of his flock has its ideal fulfillment in the Good Shepherd, who would have given His life for even one member of the human race (see DA 483).

12. Hireling. The Mishnah mentions four kinds of bailees (guardians): “a gratuitous bailee, a borrower, a paid bailee, and a hirer. A gratuitous bailee must swear for everything [if the bailment is lost or destroyed through any cause, excepting negligence, the unpaid trustee must swear to the occurrence, and is free from liability]. A borrower must pay for everything. A paid bailee or a hirer must swear concerning an animal that was injured, captured [in a raid] or that perished; but must pay for a loss or theft” (*Baba Mezi’a* 7. 8, in Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 537). The same tractate sets forth the responsibility of the guardian as follows: “[If] one wolf [attacks], it is not an unavoidable accident; if two [attack], it is an unavoidable accident. ... [The attack of] two dogs is not an unavoidable accident. ... A robber’s [attack] is an unavoidable accident. [Damage done by] a lion, bear, leopard, panther and snake ranks as an unavoidable accident. When

is this? If they came [and attacked] of their own accord: but if he [the shepherd] led them to a place infested by wild beasts and robbers, it is no unavoidable accident" (*ibid.* 7. 9, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 540).

The hireling cares more for his hire than for the sheep. He does not take a personal interest in the flock (cf. 1 Peter 5:2). The hour of danger distinguishes him from the true shepherd.

The wolf catcheth them. According to the Mishnah, if only one wolf attacked, the shepherd was held accountable for the flock; if two, it was counted as an unavoidable accident (see above under "Hireling"). But the true shepherd would risk his life to protect the flock. Compare Matt. 10:6; Acts 20:29.

Scattereth the sheep. Compare Zech. 13:7.

13. Hireling fleeth. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of this clause. However, some clause is needed to complete the thought of the sentence. The RSV supplies "he flees." For a discussion of the hireling see on v. 12.

14. The good shepherd. See on v. 11.

Know my sheep. He knows His sheep by name (v. 3). They know not only His voice (v. 4), but they know *Him*. Knowledge leads to action. The good shepherd who knows the sheep of his flock, takes a personal, loving interest in each one of them; the sheep, in turn, knowing the character of their shepherd, place implicit confidence in their guardian and render loving, unquestioning obedience. See DA 479.

15. Know I the Father. On the close relationship between the Father and the Son see on Matt. 11:27; John 1:1, 18; cf. John 7:29; John 8:55.

Lay down my life. See on v. 11.

16. Other sheep. These were the Gentiles, Isaiah had predicted that the Messiah would be "a light of the Gentiles" (Isa. 42:6; cf. Isa. 49:6). Jesus declared Himself to be that light (Matt. 12:16–21). He was the light not of the Jewish nation only but of the world (John 8:12). "God so loved the *world*, that He gave" Jesus (ch. 3:16). At the time the Gentiles would take their place in the spiritual kingdom many of the Jews would be rejected (Matt. 8:11, 12; Rom. 11:1–26). The teaching of Jesus was explicit on this subject though it was not distinctly understood. The true position of the Gentile in the early church was a point much discussed (see on Acts 15:1).

Hear my voice. As do the other sheep (v. 3).

One fold. Literally, "one flock." The reading "fold" has no support in any Greek manuscript and was introduced by Jerome, who translated both *aulē* (fold) and *poimnē* (flock) by the Latin *ovile* (fold). Jerome's reading accords with the Roman Catholic assumption that that church is the one true fold. On the other hand the interpretation given to this passage by many Protestant commentators that there are many folds in which the one flock is housed is not hinted at in this passage.

17. Therefore. Demonstrations of unselfish love such as Jesus' voluntary offering of Himself to redeem mankind became added reasons for the Father's love.

Take it again. The plan of salvation had been laid before the creation of the earth (Rev. 13:8; PP 63). The resurrection of Jesus was as much a part of the eternal plan as the crucifixion. Jesus would pass under the dominion of death for but a brief period (Ps. 16:10; cf. Acts 2:31, 32) and then come forth glorified to be the resurrection and the life (John 11:25) and to be man's intercessor (Heb. 7:25). As a result of His humiliation the Father would highly exalt Him and give Him a name above every name (Phil. 2:9).

18. No man. Literally, “no one,” a term that might include supernatural beings. The laying down of Jesus’ life for the salvation of man was entirely voluntary. There was no compulsion on the part of His Father (see on v. 17). Nor could Satan have touched His life had He not laid it down voluntarily.

Taketh. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between this and the reading “took.” This latter reading could be understood in the sense that Christ’s death was “foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1 Peter 1:20). He was the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). But the offering of His life was voluntary.

Power. Gr. *exousia*, “authority,” “right,” “privilege,” rather than ability or strength (see on ch. 1:12).

Received of my Father. The procedure was in harmony with the will of God the Father. At the same time it was Christ’s own will to take it up again; it was His free act. The Father and Son were working in full accord with the agreement entered into before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:20; PP 63).

19. Division. As there had been in the case of the man born blind (ch. 9:16; cf. ch. 7:43).

20. He hath a devil. An old charge (John 7:20; 8:48; cf. Mark 3:21, 22). For a discussion of demon possession see Additional Note on Mark 1. Madness was considered one of the results of demon possession.

21. That hath a devil. This group reasoned that the speech and actions of Jesus were very different from those of one demon possessed. When a demon takes control it usually disorders the mind, confuses and beclouds the thinking, and produces incoherent speech and reasoning. Under no circumstances could one possessed by an evil spirit perform a miracle so outstanding as the opening of the eyes of a man born blind. There is evidence in this verse of the presence of the presence of a better group among the Sanhedrin.

22. Feast of the dedication. [At the Feast of Dedication, John 10:22–42. See Closing Peraean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord] This feast was instituted by Judas Maccabaeus to celebrate the cleansing of the Temple and the restoration of its services following the defilement by Antiochus Euphron (see on Dan. 11:14). According to 1 Macc. 4:59 “Judas and his brethren with the whole congregation of Israel ordained, that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year by the space of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month Casleu, with mirth and gladness.” Josephus says the festival was called “the festival of Lights” (*Antiquities* xii. 7.7 [325]). It was celebrated in somewhat the same manner as the Feast of Tabernacles (2 Macc. 10:6, 7). The month of Casleu (Kislev, or Chisleu) corresponds to our Nov./Dec. (see Vol. II, p. 116). In rabbinical literature the feast is called Hanukkah, meaning “dedication.”

It was winter. According to the Talmud (*Baba Mezi’a* 106b, Soncino ed., p. 608) winter extended from about the middle of Kislev to the middle of Shebat (about the middle of December to the middle of December to the middle of February). The word for winter (*cheimōn*) may refer either to the season or simply to wet, stormy weather. John may have introduced the remark simply to show that Jesus was in Solomon’s porch (v. 23) because the weather was inclement at that season.

23. Solomon’s porch. A colonnade to the east of the Temple proper that was supposed to have survived the destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C. and thus to have

been a part of the workmanship of Solomon (see Josephus *Antiquities* xx. 9. 7; *War* v. 5. 1 [185]). The porch is mentioned also in Acts 3:11; 5:12.

24. *Make us to doubt.* Literally, “lift up our soul.” The expression is thought to mean “keep us in suspense,” or possibly “trouble [annoy, or vex] us.” Judging from the attitude the Jews had manifested up to this point, this was not a sincere inquiry.

Christ. That is, the Messiah (see on Matt. 1:1). Jesus avoided applying this title to Himself, perhaps largely because of its political connotations (see on Luke 4:19).

25. *I told you.* If Jesus had given a straight Yes answer to the question, the Jews would have misunderstood Him, for He was not the messiah of Jewish expectations (see on Luke 4:19). He could not have said No without, in a sense at least, denying His divine mission. As far as the record goes He had never *publicly* laid claim to that title (cf. John 4:26). However, He had repeatedly affirmed His kinship with His Father so as to leave no doubt in the mind of the honest seeker as to His identity (see chs. 5:17–47; 7:14–44; 8:12–59).

Works that I do. See on ch. 5:36.

26. *Not of my sheep.* Faith and obedience are the earmarks of the followers of the True Shepherd. The unbelief of the Jews was not the *result* of their not belonging to Christ’s fold, but it was evidence that they were not His sheep.

As I said unto you. Textual evidence favors the omission (cf. p. 146) of this clause. No essential point is involved. Whether stated or not, Jesus was referring to the discussion of the good shepherd in vs. 1–18.

27. *Hear my voice.* See on v. 4.

28. *I give.* The tense is present. The gift is bestowed now (see on chs. 8:51; 10:10).

They shall never perish. The negative is very strongly expressed in the Greek. In its fullest significance “perish” here has reference to the final, irrevocable death, the second death (Rev. 20:14; cf. Matt. 10:28; John 3:16). The first death is only a short sleep (Ps. 146:4; 2 Cor. 5:1–4; 1 Thess. 4:13–18), a brief laying to rest “from the evil to come” (Isa. 57:1, 2), during which time the life of the righteous is “hid with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3). Physical death comes to the righteous and the wicked alike and from this the “sheep” are not protected. They are, however, given the promise that they will not be “hurt” by the second death (Rev. 2:11; cf. ch. 20:6). See on John 3:16; 5:25–29.

Any man. Literally, “anyone,” Satan included. There is only one way in which the sheep may be removed from the shepherd’s hand, and that is by their own voluntary choice. When the sheep depart they do so voluntarily, and have no one to blame but themselves. They cannot charge against Satan their defection, for though he may solicit he cannot force men to apostatize (see 5T 177). This verse lends no support to the fatal presumption that once a man is saved it is impossible for him to be lost. There is nothing to prevent the sheep from wandering away from the shepherd’s care if they choose to do so.

29. *My Father, which gave them me.* Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between this and the reading, “As for my Father, that which he has given me is greater than all.” The context seems definitely to favor the reading that appears in the KJV, RSV, etc. The point of discussion is apparently the superiority of the Father over all as the basis for the security of the sheep, not the superiority of the sheep.

30. *Are one.* The word for “one” is neuter, showing that unity of person is not the point under discussion. Jesus is not the point under discussion. Jesus asserted His unity

with the Father in will, purpose, and objectives. The Father was behind the words and actions of Jesus. Beyond that the words carried the implication of Jesus' close relationship with the Father. The Jews understood His words to be a claim to divinity (ch. 10:32, 33; cf. ch. 5:18, 19).

31. Took up stones. They had done so about two months before at the Feast of Tabernacles (ch. 8:59).

32. From my Father. Compare chs. 5:19, 36; 9:4.

For which. Literally, "for what kind."

Stone. That is, attempt to stone, as the Greek may be interpreted. The action is attempted but not carried out.

33. For blasphemy. The Jews felt the force of Jesus' reproach and would not admit that His good works were without meaning to them. It was true, nevertheless, that His good works had stimulated their ill will into more intense activity. However, they credited themselves with a higher motive than a doctrinal one; they affected great jealousy for the honor of God. The charge of blasphemy was later lodged before Pilate (ch. 19:7).

34. In your law. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between retaining or omitting the pronoun "your." However, even if the reading "in your law" is accepted it need not be taken as a disavowal by Jesus of the law that He Himself had given. The "your" could emphasize the thought that the law that you yourselves recognize as authoritative says, etc. Compare ch. 8:17. The word "law" (Gr. *nomos*), here as in chs. 12:34; 15:25; etc., is used of the entire OT Scriptures as they were then recognized, and not of the Pentateuch only, as frequently was the case (ch. 1:17; etc.). Such a use of "law" is found also in rabbinical literature. For example, in answer to the question as to where the Torah (Law) attests the resurrection of the dead, the Talmud quotes Ps. 84:4 as evidence (*Sanhedrin* 91b, Soncino ed., p. 614).

Ye are gods. The quotation is from Ps. 82:6. The Psalm is an arraignment of unjust judges, spoken of as "gods" (see Introduction to Ps. 82, and on vs. 1, 6). Rabbinical tradition applied the term "gods" to those who received the law: "The Israelites accepted the Torah only so that the Angel of Death should have no dominion over them [Ps. 82:6, 7]" (Talmud *'Abodah Zarah* 5a, Soncino ed., p. 21). Jesus seems to make His reply in terms of this tradition (see on John 10:35). However, He was "God" in an altogether different sense from that of Ps. 82:6.

35. The word of God came. If, as seems likely, Jesus was thinking of the rabbinical interpretation of Ps. 82:6 (see on John 10:34), then the Israelites generally, who received the law, are referred to.

Broken. Gr. *luō*, "to loose," "to break," "to annul," "to cancel" (see on Matt. 5:19). This principle the Jews acknowledged. Therefore the conclusions based on this principle they must also acknowledge. If the Scriptures called the Israelites "gods," how could the Jews accuse Jesus of blasphemy for claiming to be the Son of God?

36. Sanctified. That is, set aside for a special purpose (see on Gen. 2:3).

Sent into. See chs. 3:17; 20:21. At the same time the coming of Jesus into this world was voluntary (cf. on ch. 5:18).

Son of God. He had not claimed divinity directly, but by implication (see chs. 2:16; 5:19–30; 10:30).

37. Believe me not. “God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith” (SC 105). The miracles that Jesus performed were designed to provide the necessary basis of faith (see p. 209). Furthermore, the character of Jesus was wholly consistent with that of the Father. Likewise in the early church the works of the apostles and the supernatural gifts of the Spirit bestowed upon the believers confirmed “the testimony of Christ” (1 Cor. 1:6).

38. Believe the works. See on v. 37.

Know, and believe. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading “know, and understand,” that is, come to know, and continue in the knowledge. The literal meaning of the reading reflected in the KJV is “come to know and fix your faith.”

In me. Once more Jesus asserts His oneness with the Father (see on v. 30).

39. Sought again. Compare chs. 7:30, 32, 44; 8:20, 59.

Escaped. Compare ch. 8:59.

40. Beyond Jordan. For a discussion of Jesus’ ministry in Peraea see on Matt. 19:1.

Where John. See on ch. 1:28.

There he abode. Jesus seems to have spent the major portion of the time between the Feast of Dedication (see on v. 22) and the Passover some months later in Peraea (see on Matt. 19:1).

41. Many resorted. In refreshing contrast with the rejection at Jerusalem (v. 39).

John did no miracle. In contrast with Jesus, who wrought miracles there (Matt. 19:2). For the testimony of John concerning himself see ch. 1:19–28. John claimed to be merely a voice. Nevertheless his ministry had made a deep impression upon the people in the region of his labors, and the reception now accorded Jesus was doubtless due largely to John’s work. The people remembered the message of the forerunner.

42. Many believed. A common phrase in John (see chs. 4:41; 7:31; 8:30).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 DA 477

1–30 DA 476–484

2–4 DA 478

3 DA 479, 480; FE 273; ML 160; MM 181; 4T 444, 503; 5T 346, 435

4 DA 479, 480; FE 271; 1T 232; 3T 228

5 PP 191; 2T 142; 5T 512

9, 10 DA 477

10 DA 270, 787; ML 295

11 CT 261; DA 24, 476; GW 181; LS 186; 5T 346

11–14 PP 191

14 TM 158

14, 15 DA 476; GW 181

14–17 DA 476; GW 181

14–17 DA 483

15 SL 82

16 6T 315

17 SC 14; SL 82

17, 18 DA 484, 785

18 ML 295

27 AH 307; CG 467; CT 114; 6T 401

27, 28 DA 480
28, 29 AA 553, 586; FE 308; MH 182; PK 587; SC 72; 1T 97; 6T 367
30 MH 419; 8T 265; 9T 68
33 DA 470
41 DA 219

CHAPTER 11

1 *Christ raiseth Lazarus, four days buried. 45 Many Jews believe. 47 The high priests and Pharisees gather a council against Christ. 49 Caiaphas prophesieth. 54 Jesus hid himself. 55 At the passover they enquire after him, and lay wait for him.*

1. A certain man. [*The Raising of Lazarus*, John 11:1–45. See Closing Peraean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] For the chronology of this event see on Matt. 19:1; Luke 17:1, 11.

Lazarus. This name is derived from the Heb. *ʿElʿazar*, signifying probably “whom God helps,” “whose help is God,” or “God helps.” Lazarus is not mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels, though Luke refers to the visit of Jesus to the home of Mary and Martha (ch. 10:38–42). Luke, however, takes no note of the fact that these sisters had a brother who was greatly beloved by Jesus. The beggar in the parable of Luke 16:19–31 was named Lazarus. Some see a possible connection between the present incident and the choice of the name for the beggar (see on Luke 16:20).

Bethany. A village about 15 furlongs (about 1.7 mi., or 2.7 km.) from Jerusalem (see v. 18), on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. The place is generally identified with the modern *el-ʿAzariyeh*, meaning “Lazarus’ [village].”

Mary. For the identification of Mary see Additional Note on Luke 7.

Martha. For a character sketch of Martha see on Luke 10:41.

2. Anointed the Lord. See on ch. 12:1–7. See Additional Note on Luke 7. Though John does not mention the incident until later, he apparently assumes that his readers are familiar with the narrative.

3. Sent unto him. That is, sent a messenger.

Lovest. Gr. *phileō*, “to love as a friend.” For a distinction between *phileō* and *agapaō*, the love of admiration, respect, and esteem, see on Matt. 5:43, 44. *Agapaō* is used in John 11:5 for the love of Jesus for Lazarus and his sisters. The sisters’ prayer for their sick loved one was uttered in simple words indicative of their intimate friendliness and love. They felt that Jesus needed simply to be informed of their need and He would come immediately to their aid. When He tarried they could not understand His delay. Grief filled their hearts when their brother passed away. Their prayers appeared to be unanswered. Yet He who understood all and who was acquainted with the future had in view a more glorious answer than they anticipated.

4. Not unto death. The sickness did result in death, but in this instance death was of only short duration and soon gave way to life.

But for. Gr. *hina*, here properly understood as a result clause (see on ch. 9:3). That is, glory would accrue to the name of God as a *result* of the sickness and death of Lazarus. God delights to take the devices of the enemy and overrule them for purposes of mercy in behalf of “them that love” Him (Rom. 8:28; DA 471).

5. Loved. Gr. *agapaō*, the love of admiration, respect, and esteem (see on Matt. 5:43, 44). For the love of Jesus for Lazarus alone the word *phileō* is used (see on John 11:3). Some commentators see evidence in vs. 3, 5 that John here uses *phileō* and *agapaō* synonymously. This is not a necessary conclusion. In fact *agapaō* may have been designed chosen in v. 5, where the sisters are involved, to obviate a possible deduction that merely human affection was meant. *Agapaō* is frequently employed in the writings of John to describe the love that Christians are to manifest toward one another (John 13:34; 15:12; 1 John 4:7, 11; etc.).

6. Abode two days. The delay was for a purpose known to Jesus but unknown to the anxious family in Bethany. If Jesus permitted Lazarus to fall under the dominion of death, it would be possible for Him to demonstrate His divinity and to give irrefutable evidence that He was indeed the resurrection and the life. By the miracle of raising Lazarus to life Jesus aimed to give crowning evidence to the disbelieving Jews that He was the Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

From Christ's headquarters in Peraea to Bethany in Judea, a distance of perhaps 25 mi. (40 km.), was about a day's journey. Jesus' journey may have been more measured, perhaps occupying two days. It was His custom to minister to those along the way (see DA 529). Lazarus was apparently still alive when the messenger returned from Jesus (see DA 526), but must have died shortly afterward, for when Jesus arrived Lazarus had been dead four days (v. 17). It is thus possible to fit the various time elements of the chapter together, and it is not necessary to conclude, as some have, that Lazarus was already dead when the messenger arrived was already to inform Jesus.

7. Into Judæa again. Jesus had recently left Judea because of the hostility of the Jews (John 10:39, 40; see on Matt. 19:1). In His suggestion that they return, He did not mention Lazarus, and apparently Lazarus was not in the disciples' mind, as their reply would seem to indicate (see John 11:8).

8. Master. Gr. *rhabbi*, a title applied to eminent teachers, meaning literally, "my great one" (see on ch. 1:38).

Stone thee. See ch. 10:39.

Thither again. It seemed sheer folly to the disciples for Jesus to risk His life in the land of unbelief and deadly enmity.

9. Twelve hours. The Jewish day was reckoned from sunrise to sunset and was divided into twelve parts. As the length of the day varied with the seasons, from about 14 hours and 12 minutes at the time of the summer solstice to about 10 hours and 3 minutes at the time of the winter solstice, so the length of the hour varied. The maximum variation in the length of an hour was some 20 minutes.

Walk in the day. Compare the thought in vs. 9, 10 with that expressed in ch. 9:4 (see comment there). There the emphasis is on the thought of labor while opportunity lasts; here on the fact that Jesus' hour had not yet come (see on ch. 7:6).

11. Our friend. Lazarus is here represented as a friend of the disciples as well (see on v. 3).

Sleepeth. Gr. *koimaō*, a word used both of ordinary sleep (Matt. 28:13; Luke 22:45; etc.) and of the sleep of death (Matt. 27:52; 1 Cor. 7:39; etc.). The disciples understood Jesus to speak of natural sleep (see p. 105).

The following comparisons demonstrate the suitability of sleep as a figure by which to represent death: (1) Sleep is a state of unconsciousness. "The dead know not any thing" (Eccl. 9:5, 6). (2) Sleep is rest from all outward activities of life. "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave" (Eccl. 9:10). (3) Sleep renders conscious thought impossible. "His breath goeth forth . . . his thoughts perish" (Ps. 146:4). (4) Sleep continues until one is awakened. "So man lieth down . . . till the heavens be no more" (Job 14:12). (5) Sleep prevents association in the activities of those who are awake. "Neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done" (Eccl. 9:6). (6) Sleep renders inoperative the emotions of the soul. "Their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished" (Eccl. 9:6). (7) Sleep comes normally and inevitably to all. "The living know that they shall die" (Eccl. 9:5). (8) Sleep causes all praise of God to cease. "The dead praise not the Lord" (Ps. 115:17; cf. Isa. 38:18).

12. Do well. Gr. *sōzō*, of sickness, "to get well," "to recover."

13. Howbeit. Christ's reference to sleep was not comprehended. The disciples were hopeful that Lazarus had now passed the crisis and was recuperating in a wholesome sleep.

14. Plainly. Jesus no longer spoke in a metaphor.

15. Not there. The implication is that death would not have occurred if Jesus had been there.

Ye may believe. The faith of the disciples in Jesus as the Son of God would be strengthened by the crowning miracle of Jesus' ministry (cf. on v. 6).

16. Thomas. A transliteration of the Heb. *te'om*, "twin" (see on Mark 3:18).

Didymus. A transliteration of the Gr. *Didumos*, also meaning "twin." The ancient tradition found, for example, in the apocryphal Acts of Thomas, that he was a twin of Jesus is entirely without foundation. Thomas plays a comparatively prominent role in John (see chs. 14:5; 20:24–29; 21:2). He appears in his characteristic nature "truehearted, yet timid and fearful" (see DA 296). Since his Master was bent on going to Bethany, his loyalty led him to follow, though to him, with his mind full of the darkest apprehension, it appeared that they were walking into the jaws of death.

17. Four days. See on v. 39. For the relation of this time period to the "two days" see on v. 6.

18. Bethany. See on v. 1.

Nigh unto Jerusalem. Doubtless mentioned to show that it would be convenient for many visitors from Jerusalem to be present (see v. 19). Among these visitors were some bitterly hostile to Jesus.

Fifteen furlongs. About 1.7 mi. (2.7 km.) (see p. 50).

19. To comfort. Comforting the bereaved was reckoned among the works of love to which an Israelite was obligated. Great rewards were believed to come to those who carried out the obligation, and those who neglected their responsibilities were warned of punishments to follow.

20. Then Martha. Martha reflects the same character traits noted concerning her in Luke 10:38–42. She is impulsive, energetic, and given to practical duty. Mary, on the other hand, who was contemplative, pensive, but with a great store of love, "sat still in the house." Jesus was outside the village when Martha met Him (see John 11:30).

21. *If thou hadst.* The same words were spoken by Mary when she first met Jesus (v. 32). Doubtless this sentiment had been oft upon the lips and hearts of the sisters since the death of their brother. The sisters were correct in their observation (see on v. 15; see DA 528).

22. *Thou wilt ask.* Martha acknowledged Jesus to be the Son of God (v. 27), and believed that God always heard the petitions of His Son. It is not certain to what extent she dared entertain the hope that Jesus would raise her brother to life. She had doubtless heard of the raising of the young maid to life (Mark 5:35–43), and of the restoration of the widow's son (Luke 7:11–15). She felt assured that Jesus would do something to bring consolation.

23. *Rise again* Though the Sadducees denied the resurrection (see on Matt. 22:23), the Pharisees, the more numerous of the two parties, boldly confessed their belief in the resurrection and the future life (see Acts 23:8). Doubtless many belonging to this persuasion had sought to comfort Martha with the words used by Jesus on this occasion.

24. *At the last day.* Martha's confidence in the future resurrection was strong and helped to mitigate her sorrow (cf. 1 Thess. 4:13–18). But that day seemed far distant; she was looking for something more immediate to assuage her grief (see on John 11:22).

25. *I am the resurrection.* This is another of the "I am" sayings of Jesus (cf. chs. 6:35, 51; 8:12; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 14:16; 15:1, 5). Jesus here declares Himself to be the Life-giver. In Him is "life, original, unborrowed, underived" (DA 530). He who receives Him receives life (1 John 5:11, 12) and is assured of a future resurrection to eternal life (cf. 1 Cor. 15:51–55; 1 Thess. 4:16; etc.).

Believeth. Jesus was seeking to turn attention away from the resurrection in the remote future and to direct it to Himself. Only those who fix their faith on Him during the period of their earthly sojourn can expect to receive life in that day. Faith in Christ is the matter of immediate concern.

Though he were dead. Rather, "even if he should die"

26. *Shall never die.* The negative is strongly expressed in the Greek (see on ch. 4:48). The reference here is clearly to the second death and not to the cessation of life that comes to all at the end of their earthly pilgrimage (see on ch. 10:28). This latter experience is implied in ch. 11:25 in the expression "though he were dead," which is better rendered, "even though he should die." The second death is synonymous with the expression "perish" in ch. 3:16. From this experience those who live and believe in Jesus will be delivered (Rev. 20:6).

27. *I believe.* Martha reaffirms her faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and thus indirectly in what He has just asserted.

Christ. See on Matt. 1:1.

Son of God. For the meaning of this phrase as applied to Jesus see on Luke 1:35; see Additional Note on John 1.

Come into the world. Compare with this expression Matt. 11:3; John 1:9; 3:31; 6:14; 9:39; 16:28; 18:37.

28. *Secretly.* Doubtless so that mourners would not follow Mary to the place where Jesus was and that Mary might meet Him alone. The sisters knew also of the plot to kill Jesus and so exercised caution in not divulging the fact that He was in the vicinity. Possibly, also, this consideration may have led them to avoid making a direct request (see on v. 3) for Him to come.

Master. Gr. *didaskalos*, literally meaning “teacher,” a common title of Jesus (see ch. 13:13; see on ch. 1:38).

29. Arose quickly. She had been seated in the house (v. 20).

30. Not yet come. Doubtless because of the hostility of the Jews (see v. 8), and further that He might meet the sisters alone.

31. Followed her. Their following is significant, for they thus became witnesses to the miracle that Christ was about to perform.

32. Fell down. She was more demonstrative than her sister (cf. vs. 20, 21).

Hadst been here. Precisely what Martha had said (see on v. 21). But apparently no conversation took place as in the case of Martha. Mary lay prostrate at the feet of Jesus, weeping. Perhaps her emotion was too great for words.

33. Jews also weeping. Mary’s weeping and that of the close friends of Lazarus was genuine, but much of the other weeping was probably the perfunctory wailing characteristic of Oriental funerals. The word here translated “weep” occurs in Mark 5:39 to describe the affected wail of the hired mourners.

Groaned. Gr. *embrimaomai*, which basically means “to pant” or “to snort [in anger].” This word occurs in the LXX of Dan. 11:30 in a context that suggests indignation. This idea seems to be present also in Mark 14:5. The associated phrase, “and was troubled” (John 11:33), suggests the same idea here. Hence *embrimaomai* describes a disturbance of mind, a strong emotional experience, here of righteous indignation, doubtless caused by the hypocritical sorrow of the Jews assembled, some of whom would soon plan the death of him for whom they now mourned, and of Him who was soon to impart life to the dead (see DA 533).

34. Laid. Gr. *tithēmi*, a common word for the disposition of a dead body (see chs. 19:41, 42; 20:2, 13, 15), hence roughly equivalent to “bury.”

35. Wept. Gr. *dakruō*, “to shed tears.” The word occurs only here in the NT. In the LXX it occurs in Job 3:24; Eze. 27:35; Micah 2:6. The word for “weeping” in John 11:33 is *klaiō*, a word that describes not only subdued weeping but also the wailing that commonly accompanied Oriental mourning for the dead (see on v. 33). *Klaiō*, however, appears in Luke 19:41, but in another sense.

In His humanity Jesus was touched with human sorrow, and wept with the sorrowing. “Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren” (Heb. 2:17). Because of His identification with humanity “he is able to succour them that are tempted” Heb. 2:18. For a discussion of the humanity of Jesus see on Luke 2:52; John 1:14. For a discussion of the cause of Jesus tears see DA 533, 534.

36. Loved. Gr. *phileō* (see on vs. 3, 5).

37. Could not this man? On the surface these words appear to be a repetition of the idea expressed by both Martha and Mary that if the Lord had been present Lazarus would not have died (vs. 21, 32). However, in their context (see on v. 38) it seems more natural to interpret them as expressing skepticism and doubt, in fact, even derision, as though they had said: “If He were truly the miracle worker He claims to be, surely He would have done something for one of His closest friends.” The inference they would draw is that after all, the present failure is proof that He did not open the eyes of the blind.

38. Groaning. See on v. 33. The note of unbelief introduced by a segment of the Jews (see v. 37) contributed to the disturbance of mind.

Grave. Gr. *mnēmeion*, literally, “a memorial,” from *mnēmoneuō*, “to remember,” used frequently of a memorial for the dead, but mostly of the grave or grave chamber itself (Mark 16:5; etc.).

Cave. Natural caves, further prepared by hewing, were common burying places in Palestine (cf. Gen. 23:19; Isa. 22:16). The Mishnah describes what was probably a typical family tomb: “The central space of the grotto must contain [an area of] six cubits by eight. And thirteen chambers are to open out into it; four on one side, four on the other, three in front [of the entrance], and one on the right of the entrance and one on the left. Outside the entrance to the grotto is to be made a court of six [cubits] by six, [which is] the space the bier and those who bury it occupy. Two grottos are to be opened out into it; one on the one side and one on the other” (*Baba Bathra* 6. 8, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, pp. 421, 422). Archeological discoveries show that the entrances to tombs were usually on a horizontal plane.

Stone. These stones, often circular so that they might be rolled, covered the opening of the vault. Often a buttressing stone held the circular stone securely in place (see Mishnah *Oholoth* 2. 4, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 156).

39. Take ye away. Jesus could have removed the stone by a miracle. But the task was something that human hands could perform. Men are to cooperate with God and not to expect God to do for them that which they can do themselves (see p. 209).

He stinketh. This impulsive outburst shows that Martha’s faith was too feeble to grasp the full significance of what was implied in vs. 23–26 (see on v. 22). Her reaction provided positive evidence to the Jews that no deception was being practiced, and that Lazarus was really dead. The fact that Martha feared that putrefaction had already set in suggests that the body had not been embalmed, although v. 44 indicates a careful preparation of the body.

Four days. Jewish tradition of the 3d century A.D., probably reflecting elements of belief in the time of Jesus, taught that for three days the soul returns to the body in the hope of entering into it again. When at the end of the period the soul observes that the countenance has become disfigured, it departs and never returns. Hence for three days the relatives would visit the tomb, in the hope that the person was probably only in a coma, and not actually dead. When the fourth day arrived there was no longer any question about death. If these traditions were current in the time of Jesus, the fact that it was the fourth day would be convincing evidence that Lazarus was really dead. Jesus may have had this popular concept in mind when He delayed His arrival until the fourth day.

40. Said I not? The exact words are not found in vs. 21–27, but are implied when these verses are compared with the message dispatched by Jesus when He was first informed of Lazarus’ illness (v. 4; cf. DA 526).

41. Stone. See on v. 38.

From the place. Textual evidence favors the omission (cf. p. 146) of the explanatory phrase, “from the place where the dead was laid.”

Lifted up his eyes. A common attitude of Jesus in prayer (cf. Mark 6:41; John 17:1). As far as the people were concerned the custom is seldom mentioned. More commonly, at least according to a tradition of the 2d century A.D., which, however, probably reflected

earlier custom, the eyes were directed toward the Temple (see, for example, Mishnah *Berakoth* 4. 5, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 174).

Father. Jesus' customary form of address (see Luke 22:42; John 12:27; 17:1, 11, 25). In the Lord's Prayer Jesus taught His followers to address God by this title (see on Matt. 6:9).

Thou hast heard me. Jesus was in constant communion with His Father. The incidents of His life were in accordance with a plan agreed to before Jesus left heaven (see on Luke 2:49). The outworking of that plan called for a crowning evidence of Christ's divinity to be given. The prayer was simple, in marked contrast with the incantations of workers of magic. There was no request, simply an expression of thankfulness, but with it was a tacit acknowledgement of the Son's complete harmony with the will of the Father.

42. Because of the people. Otherwise, there was no need of the prayer. The resurrection of the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7:11–17) had taken place in a small and obscure town in Galilee. The raising of Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:41–56) took place in the seclusion of the bedchamber, with only a few witnesses present. Furthermore, she had been dead but a short time (see on John 11:39). The present miracle was performed in the open daylight, with friends and foes alike as witnesses. Every possible reason that might give ground for doubt, was met. The Pharisees had charged that Jesus cast out devils by the prince of the devils (Matt. 12:24). Jesus openly acknowledged His union with the Father, without whom He claimed to do nothing (see John 5:19–30; 7:28, 29), and now declared His objective to be, "that they may believe that thou hast sent me."

43. Cried. Gr. *kraugazō*, "to call out loudly." The verb appears elsewhere in the NT in (Matt. 12:19; 15:22; John 18:40; 19:6, 15; Acts 22:23).

Loud voice. Gr. *phōnē megalē*. These two Greek words appear together also in Matt. 24:31; Mark 15:34, 37; Rev. 1:10.

Lazarus. Jesus addressed him as we would a familiar friend to arouse him from sleep.

Come forth. Gr. *deuro exō*. *Deuro*, meaning "hither," has the force of "come," and is thus translated in Matt. 19:21; Mark 10:21; Acts 7:34; etc. *Exō* means "out."

There is no hint in the entire narrative that the soul of Lazarus left his body at the moment of death and ascended to heaven. If such had been the case, we might have expected Jesus to address the conscious soul rather than the lifeless body. He could have said, "Lazarus, come down and live again in the flesh." But like David, Lazarus had "not ascended into the heavens" (Acts 2:34). The past four days had been to him a period of oblivion and unconsciousness (see Ps. 146:4). If anyone expected to learn from him a glorious account of the exploits of the soul after death, he was doomed to disappointment, for Lazarus had nothing to relate.

44. Hand and foot. There has been much speculation as to how Lazarus could move, under the circumstances. There is no doubt that his movements were impeded, for Jesus ordered that he be loosed (cf. DA 536).

Graveclothes. Gr. *keiriai*, "bandages." The Mishnah speaks of "a corpse," and its "coffin and shrouds" (*Shabbath* 23. 4, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 769). Compare ch. 19:40.

Napkin. Gr. *soudarion* from the Latin *sudarium*, literally, “a cloth for wiping perspiration.” The word is used elsewhere in Luke 19:20; John 20:7; Acts 19:12.

45. Believed on him. With many, the miracle, so utterly beyond expectation, accomplished its objective (v. 42; cf. chs. 2:23; 7:31). This response must have brought encouragement to Jesus and His disciples.

46. To the Pharisees. [*Withdrawal to Ephraim*, John 11:46–57. See Closing Peraean Ministry.] See p. 51. Among the informers were doubtless some of the spies who constantly dogged the footsteps of Jesus. Others may simply have felt that so notable an event should come to the attention of the religious leaders. They may have desired counsel as to how they should relate themselves to it.

47. The chief priests. These were for the most part Sadducees (see p. 52). The Sadducees denied the possibility of the resurrection (Matt. 22:23; Acts 23:8). They were greatly disturbed at having one of their principal theories so summarily disproved. They now joined the Pharisees in open hostility to Jesus. In fact the chief priests played a leading role in the arrest, trial, and condemnation of Jesus (see Matt. 20:18; 21:15, 23, 45; 26:3; etc.).

Pharisees. See p. 51.

Council. Gr. *sunedrion*, derived from *sun*, “together,” and *hedra*, “seat,” transliterated into the English as “Sanhedrin.” On this council see p. 67.

What do we? They felt that matters had reached a pass that would permit no further delay. Opponents had become believers, enemies had become friends, and there were some in their own ranks under deep conviction. Their influence with the people was rapidly diminishing.

48. The Romans shall come. Ironically, when this Gospel was written (see p. 179) the Romans had done precisely what is here feared (see pp. 73–77), but for a very different reason. If Jesus had been the political messiah of Jewish expectations, Roman reprisals would have speedily followed any attempt to set Him on the throne. But Jesus never claimed to be a national deliverer. When the multitudes sought to take Him by force and make Him king He summarily dismissed them and withdrew from the scene (ch. 6:15).

Our place. Probably the Temple (see Jer. 7:15; 2 Macc. 5:19), or in a larger sense Jerusalem.

Nation. Despite the appointment of a Roman procurator (see p. 66) and the presence on the Temple mountain itself of the Roman fortress of Antonia (see Betrayal, Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus), the Jews enjoyed a considerable degree of freedom as far as their local affairs were concerned. This liberty they stood in danger of forfeiting, and actually did forfeit some 40 years later.

49. Caiaphas. See on Matt. 26:57; Luke 3:2.

That same year. This does not mean that the high priest held office for one year only. Anciently the office was for life, but under the Romans the high priest was deposed and a new priest installed at will. Caiaphas held office from about A.D. 18 to 36 (see on Luke 3:1). “That same year” evidently means that decisive or memorable year in which our Lord was crucified.

50. One man should die. This principle is attested in rabbinical literature. Midrash Rabbah, on Gen. 43:8 (Soncino ed., p. 846), says, “Better one life should be risked than that all should be certain [to die].” The same Midrash, on Gen. 46:26f. (Soncino ed., p.

879), says, “Better that you should be executed rather than that the whole community should be punished on account of you.” The implication of Caiaphas’ argument was that even if Jesus was innocent, it would be to Israel’s well being to have Him removed.

51. Not of himself. True, Caiaphas had a knowledge of the prophecies, but the divine predictions were but dimly understood. He was concerned about the retention of his power and of the continuance of the national life of the Jews. Nevertheless his words were remarkably prophetic of what Jesus was about to do. Jesus would die, but ironically, the nation that Caiaphas hoped would thereby be saved from dissolution, miserably perished.

52. Not for that nation only. This is a comment added by John. Caiaphas had referred only to the nation of the Jews. However, Jesus’ death would be for all, and from every nation those who accepted Him would be united into one great body of believers (Eph. 2:11–22). These were the “other sheep” that the Good Shepherd would bring (John 10:16).

53. Took counsel. The Sanhedrin officially agreed to put Jesus to death. The remaining problem was how they could execute their plan without exciting a popular tumult. There had been earlier attempts on the life of Jesus (ch. 5:18; etc.), but the raising of Lazarus had brought the issue to a crisis. Caiaphas’ suggestion of a way out without necessarily establishing the guilt or innocence of Jesus (see on v. 50) seemed to be the solution the members of the council were looking for.

54. Ephraim. Generally identified with the modern *et-Taiyibeh*, a place about 4 mi. (6.4 km.) northeast of Bethel (see 2 Sam. 13:23; 2 Chron. 13:19; Josephus *War* iv. 9. 9 [551]). It was near the wilderness extending along the Jordan valley.

55. The Jews’ passover. Considering the unnamed feast of ch. 5:1 (see comment there) to be a Passover feast, this is the fourth Passover mentioned by John (see pp. 193, 247; *The Duration of Christ’s Ministry*).

Country. That is, the region of Palestine generally, although Jews from all parts of the world attended the Passover.

Purify themselves. On ceremonial purity as a requisite to eating the Passover see 2 Chron. 30:17–20; cf. Num. 9:10. The priests at the trial of Jesus refused to enter the judgment hall lest they should be defiled and prevented from eating the Passover (John 18:28).

56. Then sought they. As they had done earlier at the Feast of Tabernacles (ch. 7:11). But now with the united efforts of the Sadducees and Pharisees (see on ch. 11:47) their search was greatly intensified.

He will not come. In view of the recent command for the arrest of Jesus there was considerable doubt as to whether He would be present at the feast. The Greek may be interpreted as conveying the idea, “He would not dare come to the feast, would He?” They apparently hoped that He would do so, and thus facilitate His arrest.

57. Chief priests. See on v. 47.

Knew. That is, “found out.”

Shew. Gr. *mēnuō*, “to disclose,” “to report”

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3–7DA 526
 5 ML 208
 8–16DA 527
 9, 10 FE 471; 3T 108; 6T 167
 14, 15 DA 528
 19–21DA 529
 21–28DA 530
 25 GC 299; ML 349; PK 627; 6T 230
 25, 26 ML 295
 29–35DA 533
 36–39DA 534
 39–41DA 535
 40 COL 145
 41–44DA 536
 45–47DA 537
 47 DA 539
 7–54DA 537–542
 48 DA 540; GC 27
 49, 50 DA 539
 50 GC 615
 51, 52 DA 540
 54 DA 541
 56 DA 558

CHAPTER 12

1 *Jesus excuseth Mary anointing his feet.* 9 *The people flock to see Lazarus.* 10 *The high priests consult to kill him.* 12 *Christ rideth into Jerusalem.* 20 *Greeks desire to see Jesus.* 23 *He foretelleth his death.* 37 *The Jews are generally blinded: 42 yet many chief rulers believe, but do not confess him: 44 therefore Jesus calleth earnestly for confession of faith.*

1. Then Jesus. [*Simon's Feast, John 12:1–9=Matt. 26:6–13=Mark 14:3–9=Luke 7:36–50.* Major comment: Matthew and Luke. See Closing Ministry at Jerusalem; The Duration of Christ's Ministry, the Opening of the Galilean Ministry, The Ministry of Our Lord .] For a discussion of the relationship of this feast to that recorded in the other Gospels see Additional Note on Luke 7.

Six days before the passover. The dinner probably took place the night of the Sabbath preceding the crucifixion (see on Matt. 21:1; 26:3), which would technically be on the first day of the week (see Vol. II, p. 101). This would be exactly six days, inclusive reckoning (see Vol. I, p. 182), before the Passover, which fell on Friday (see Additional Notes on Matt. 26, Note 1).

Where Lazarus was. See on ch. 11:1.

2. They made. The feast was in Simon's house (Matt. 26:6).

Supper. Gr. *deipnon* (see on Luke 14:12).

Martha served. As seems characteristic of her (see Luke 10:40).

3. Pound. Gr. *litra*, equivalent to the Latin *libra*, about 11 1/2 oz. avoirdupois (see p. 50). The word occurs in the NT only here and in ch. 19:39.

Ointment of spikenard. Gr. *murou nardou pistikēs*. The same combination of words is translated “ointment of pure nard” in Mark 14:3, margin. “Pure” is the translation of the adjective *pistikos*. This word is missing in the KJV translation of John 12:3, and should probably be supplied. However, not all agree that *pistikos* means “pure,” “genuine.” Some suggest the meaning “liquid.” Others consider *pistikos* a local name. For a description of the ointment see on Luke 7:37.

The feet. Matthew (ch. 26:7) and Mark (ch. 14:3) state that the ointment was poured on the head. Doubtless Mary performed both operations, with each gospel writer noting but one. Luke, like John, mentions the anointing of the feet (Luke 7:38).

The odour. The act could not be hidden. The strong odor permeating the room called attention to Mary’s act.

4. One of his disciples. Matthew notes that the “disciples ... had indignation” (Matt. 26:8). The criticism originated with Judas, but spread among other disciples.

Betray him. See on ch. 6:71.

6. Bag. Gr. *glōssokomon*, literally, a receptacle for the mouthpieces of wind instruments, but the word came to be used also to describe a receptacle for general articles, and more particularly for the storing of money. Hence “money box” would be a suitable translation. The word occurs in the LXX of 2 Chron. 24:8.

Bare. Gr. *bastazō*, generally meaning “to carry” (Luke 7:14; 22:10; etc.), also “to pick up” (John 10:31). Here the meaning is “to pilfer,” a definition clearly attested in the papyri.

7. Against the day. Textual evidence here favors the reading (cf. p. 146), “that against the day of my burial she may keep it,” or “let her keep it for the day of my burial” (RSV). However, the precise meaning of the Greek clause thus translated is uncertain. It appears unlikely that Jesus refers to a preservation of a part of the contents to be used at the time of His burial. He alludes rather to the motive that prompted the purchase of the ointment (see Matt. 26:12; Mark 14:8). For a discussion of Mary’s motive in the anointing see on Matt. 26:12; cf. DA 559, 560.

9. Much people. In general, the common people. The expression occurs again in v. 12.

Knew. Rather, “found out.”

Might see Lazarus. A sufficient reason. A man raised from the dead would attract great crowds today.

10. But the chief priests. [*The Betrayal Plot, John 12:10, 11=Matt. 26:1–5, 14–16=Mark 14:1, 2, 10, 11 Luke 22:1–6. Major comment: Matthew. See Passion Week*] In connection with the plot to put Jesus to death the chief priests plotted also the death of Lazarus. They could bring no formal charge against Lazarus. However, because his life was a witness to the divinity of the One whom they had condemned to death and a denial of the doctrine that many of them held, namely, that there was no resurrection (see on ch. 11:47), they deemed it necessary to kill him also.

11. Went away. Or, “began to withdraw” (Robertson). That is, they withdrew from Judaism and joined the ranks of the disciples of Jesus.

12. The next day. [*The Triumphal Entry, John 12:12–19=Matt. 21:1–11=Mark 11:1–11=Luke 19:29–44. Major comment: Matthew. See Closing Ministry at Jerusalem;*

Passion Week.] The next day would be the day following the feast, or Sunday (see on v. 1).

Much people. See on v. 9. Though Josephus' statement that on a particular Passover more than 2,500,000 were gathered at Jerusalem (*War* vi. 9. 3 [420–427]) is probably exaggerated, it nevertheless indicates that huge crowds must have gathered at Jerusalem during this period.

13. Branches. Literally, "palm branches." Palm branches are mentioned in 1 Macc. 13:51 in connection with the triumphal entry of Simon the high priest into the tower of Jerusalem. The palms in the hands of the great multitude of Rev. 7:9 are a symbol of triumph (see GC 665).

Cried. Rather, "kept on crying."

King of Israel. The clauses are reversed in the Greek: "Hossana: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the king of Israel." The first part is apparently a quotation from Ps. 118:25, 26, and the last phrase, "even the king of Israel," an allusion to Zech. 9:9. On Messiah as king according to Jewish expectations see on Luke 4:19; cf. John 18:37; 19:19. The ecstatic cries of the multitudes are variously reported by the gospel writers. Doubtless a variety of expressions were used.

14. A young ass. John omits the details as to how the ass was obtained (see Mark. 11:1–7).

15. Fear not. This phrase is not in the Hebrew or LXX of Zech. 9:9, the passage of Scripture here cited, but may have come from Isa. 40:9.

16. Understood not. The disciples did not understand the purpose and import of Jesus' present action. For a discussion of the purpose see on Matt. 21:5; cf. DA 571, 572. Even though Jesus had clearly told His disciples of His approaching death (Matt. 17:22, 23; etc.), they seem to have forgotten this in the excitement of the moment. His unprecedented act in permitting Himself to be declared "King of Israel" roused their hopes that He would, after all, fulfill their expectations and those of the multitude, declare Himself king, and assume the role of a political messiah. After the resurrection, through a study of the prophecies, guided by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, they understood the purpose of the act.

17. Bare record. Those who had been eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Lazarus mingled with the multitudes and bore their testimony. Thus the enthusiasm spread.

18. Met him. There were two crowds, the one accompanying Jesus and the other coming out from Jerusalem to meet Him.

19. Prevail. Gr. *ōpheleō*, used here in the sense, "to accomplish" (cf. ch. 6:63).

The world. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the reading "the whole world." Either expression simply means "everybody." The language is hyperbolic. It comes from men baffled and angry. Instead of finding the people willing to lay hands on Jesus and to deliver Him into their power, they find the multitudes surrounding Him with joyful acclamations and saluting Him as their king. Under the circumstances, any attempt to arrest Jesus would have raised a tumult. The leaders appealed to Jesus to quiet the multitudes, but without success (Luke 19:39, 40). All they could do was watch the procession and see their hated enemy enter Jerusalem in royal triumph. They probably felt somewhat like Haman leading Mordecai about on a royal horse (Esther 6:11). Not knowing what His purpose actually was, they no doubt imagined Jesus about to proclaim Himself king, abolish their power, and lead a revolt against Rome.

20. Certain Greeks. [*Interview With the Greeks, John 12:20–36^a.*] This incident probably occurred on the Tuesday preceding the crucifixion, in connection with Jesus' last visit to the Temple (see on Matt. 23:1; cf. DA 621).

To worship. The fact that they came to worship rather than to partake of the Passover suggests that these Greeks were not full proselytes. Josephus mentions foreigners who came to Jerusalem to worship at the Passover season (*War* vi. 9. 3 [427]). Half proselytes, like the Gentiles, were restricted to the Court of the Gentiles. For a description of the Temple courts see Mishnah *Middoth*, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, pp. 1–23; cf. *Kelim* 1. 8, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 11.

21. Philip. See on Mark 3:18.

Bethsaida. See on Matt. 11:21.

We would. Rather, “we desire,” or “we wish.”

See. Here used in the sense of “to have an interview,” as in Luke 8:20. On the purposes of the proposed interview see DA 622.

22. Telleth Andrew. Both Philip and Andrew bore Greek names, and their Hellenistic ancestry may account for their part in the present incident. The reason why Philip consulted Andrew is not given, but he apparently sought Andrew's advice in presenting to Jesus the case of the inquiring Greeks (see on ch. 6:8). In the narrative of the Feeding of the Five Thousand (ch. 6:1–14) Andrew reflects a more practical turn of mind than Philip, who is there shown to be not only cautious but slow of heart to believe.

23. Answered them. The words were rather a response to the situation suggested by the visit of the Greeks than a direct answer to them.

The hour is come. Earlier Jesus had announced that His hour had not yet come (see chs. 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; see on ch. 2:4). Now, however, the hour of His death was near. It was only four days, inclusive, until the crucifixion. The visit of the Greeks doubtless suggested to Jesus what would be the result of His death, namely, the conversion of many from the Gentile nations.

Son of man. See on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10.

24. Verily. See on Matt. 5:18; John 1:51.

Corn of wheat. Rather, “grain of wheat.”

Die. A simple illustration from nature. A kernel of wheat placed in the soil dies as a grain of wheat, but life is not destroyed. There is in the kernel a germ of life that the dissolution of the kernel cannot destroy. In the growth of the new plant the one kernel becomes many kernels. However, such multiplication does not take place if the seed is not cast into the ground. So it was with Jesus. If He had chosen not to die for the guilty race, He would have remained “alone.” The human race would have perished and there would have been no harvest of souls for the kingdom. By His death Jesus brought life to all who would fix their faith in Him. Compare Paul's argument in 1 Cor. 15:36.

25. Loveth his life. See on Matt. 10:39; cf. Mark 8:35; 10:39. The word for “life,” here, is *psuchē* (see on Matt. 10:28), frequently translated “soul” (Mark 8:36, 37; etc.). He who is bent on saving and preserving his physical life here will lose his “soul,” or eternal life. He who is willing to sacrifice himself in service for God in this world will preserve his “soul” and enjoy life everlasting in the world to come. Thus “the law of self-sacrifice is the law of self-preservation”; “the law of self-serving is the law of self-destruction” (DA 623, 624). He who is ready to cast away everything most dear in this life that stands in the way of his spiritual growth will find at length that he has lost

nothing worth while and that he has gained the true riches (see Phil. 3:8–10). The world looks upon the way of self-denial and self-sacrifice as foolishness and waste, even as a small child might regard the casting of good grain into the ground a senseless waste. But the future world will reveal that the devotee of this present world was indeed foolish and that the child of God was truly wise. The final loss and destruction of the “soul” is described in Matt. 10:28.

Hateth. Here used in the sense of “love less” (see on Luke 14:26).

26. Serve me. See on John 12:25; cf. Mark 9:35; 10:43–45.

Follow me. See on Matt. 16:24; cf. Mark 8:34.

Where I am. Spiritual fellowship and communion with his Lord will be the privilege of him who serves the Lord in this life (Matt. 28:20), and face to face communion will be his to enjoy in the world to come.

My Father honour. For the rewards of service see Mark 10:29, 30. The conditions and rewards of discipleship are here given, doubtless with reference to the Greeks, who were apparently contemplating discipleship.

27. My soul. And idiomatic expression practically equivalent to “I” (see on Ps. 16:10).

Troubled. Gr. *tarassō*. The same verb occurs in chs. 11:33; 13:21, with Jesus as the subject. In ch. 14:1, 27 Jesus counsels His disciples not to be “troubled.” The cause of Jesus’ present distress is indicated by His prayer, “Father, save me from this hour.” The visit of the Greeks had called to mind the ingathering of the Gentiles. But between the gospel harvest and the present moment lay the cross and the mental and physical agony that would be associated with it. From this the humanity of Jesus recoiled. A vivid contemplation of the scenes that lay ahead was the cause of the Lord’s sudden mental anguish (cf. on Matt. 26:38).

Save me. This prayer is similar to that offered a few days later in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:39). We may rest assured that if any other means to save man, involving less sacrifice, could have been found, the prayer of Jesus would have been answered. But the infinite sacrifice was necessary to accomplish all that the plan of salvation was designed to accomplish (see PP 68, 69). In view of this Jesus submitted Himself to carry the plan through to completion.

28. Father. See on Matt. 6:9; John 11:14.

Glorify thy name. The Greek places emphasis on the pronoun “thy.” This prayer was in harmony with what Jesus had earlier taught regarding His relationship to the Father, whose glory He consistently sought (see chs. 7:18; 8:50). For “name” representing character see on Matt. 6:9.

Then came. On two previous occasions a voice was heard from heaven—at the baptism (Matt. 3:17) and at the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:5).

Glorified it. Through the life, ministry, and miracles of Jesus (see, for example, ch. 11:4).

Glorify it again. In the death and resurrection of Jesus.

29. It thundered. The people heard the sound of the voice from heaven, but they could not comprehend the meaning, as was the case of those who heard the voice that spoke to Paul at the time of his conversion (see on Acts 23:9).

An angel spake. Some interpreted the sound as a divine message. This seems to imply that they understood what was being said. Judging by the reply of Jesus that the

voice came “for your sakes,” it appears that the Greeks, and doubtless others, heard and comprehended the voice (see DA 625). To them it would come as confirming evidence that Jesus was indeed the Sent of God.

30. For your sakes. See on v. 29; cf. DA 625.

31. Now. A momentous hour in the history of the world had come. Jesus was about to die for the guilty race, thus assuring the salvation of men and making certain the defeat of Satan’s kingdom. The expression “now” was thus fraught with the most weighty significance.

Judgment of this world. Not that Jesus was about to sit as judge, “for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn [or, “judge,” as *krinō* is most commonly rendered] the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (see on ch. 3:17). However, by their relationship to the Son, men were deciding their eternal destiny (see on ch. 9:39). By refusing to accept Jesus as the Messiah of prophecy and as the Saviour of the world the Jewish nation sealed its fate and incurred condemnation.

Prince of this world. This title for Satan is found only in John (cf. chs. 14:30; 16:11). Other titles given him are “god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4) and “prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2). On Satan’s usurped authority of this world see on Matt. 4:8, 9.

Cast out. There had been an earlier casting out at the time Lucifer fell from his high estate (see PP 42). Now his work would be further restricted. By his attitude toward the Son of God, Satan stood revealed in his true character. He could henceforth “no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ’s brethren” (DA 761). See further on Rev. 12:7–9.

32. Lifted up. That is, upon the cross. The same verb occurs in ch. 3:14 (see comment there), where Jesus compares His being lifted up to the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness. In ch. 8:28 Jesus again refers to His being lifted up, and speaks of the act as being performed by the Jews. This shows clearly that He is not referring to His ascension.

Will draw. The cross has, in thousands of lives, proved to be more magnetic than all the fascinations of the world. After his rather fruitless efforts in Athens, where he had met logic with logic, Paul determined in Corinth “not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2; cf. AA 244). As a result, his labors were highly successful. The magnetism of the cross has by no means diminished with the passing of the centuries. It is still “the power and wisdom of God to gather souls for Christ” (6T 67).

All men. The word “men” is supplied, and its inclusion limits the application of the verse to members of the human family only. It should be omitted, for not only were members of the human race drawn to Christ by the sacrifice of Himself, but angels, and the inhabitants of the other worlds, were drawn to Him anew by the demonstration of the sacrificial love of God (Col. 1:20).

33. What death. See on v. 32.

34. Law. Gr. *nomos*, here used of the OT generally as in ch. 10:34 (see comment there).

Christ abideth for ever. The speakers may have referred to such passages as Ps. 89:36; 110:4; Isa. 9:6; Dan. 7:13, 14. The apocalyptic literature of the period clearly envisioned the reign of the Messiah to be eternal. For example, the pseudepigraphal book of Enoch (see p. 87) declares concerning the Elect One, “For wisdom is poured out like water, and glory faileth not before him for evermore” (49:1). “And the Lord of Spirits

will abide over them, and with that Son of Man shall they eat and lie down and rise up for ever and ever” (62:14).

The Son of man. See on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10.

Must be lifted up. The questioners could not harmonize Jesus’ reference to His death with what they believed the Scriptures to teach concerning the eternal reign of the Messiah. If by the term “Son of man,” Jesus meant the Messiah, as the Jews evidently understood Him to mean (see Enoch 62:14, quoted above under “Christ abideth for ever”; see also p. 87), then what was this reference to His death? The question shows that the people understood the term “lifted up” to refer to death.

35. Yet a little while. Jesus did not answer the question directly. There were other more important things for them to understand at the moment. Time was running out. Jesus, the Light of the world (ch. 8:12), would soon leave this world. The last rays of light were shining. Six months before, He had said, “Yet a little while am I with you” (ch. 7:33). Now only a few days remained. He appealed to men to accept Him now. They were to take advantage of their present opportunities and not spend time in questions and doubts.

Walk. Gr. *peripateō* (see on ch. 7:1).

Come upon. Or, “overtake.”

Walketh in darkness. See on ch. 8:12.

36. Children of light. See on Luke 16:8. The believer becomes like Him in whom he believes. Those who receive Jesus, the Light, themselves become centers from which light radiates to others (see on Matt. 5:14–16).

Did hide himself. Compare ch. 8:59. This was Jesus’ last day at the Temple. It was, as well, His last day of public ministry. After one final appeal to the leaders of Israel Jesus left the Temple forever. See on Matt. 23:38.

37. Believed not. [*Final Rejection by the Jewish Leaders, John 12:36b–50.* See Closing Ministry at Jerusalem.] For miracles as a basis of faith see pp. 208, 209.

38. Might be fulfilled. The Greek may be translated as a clause of result rather than of purpose, as in ch. 9:3 (see comment there; cf. on ch. 11:4). The passage would then read, “They believed not in him: as a result, the saying of Esaias the prophet was fulfilled, etc.” See further on Matt. 1:22; John 12:39.

Lord, who hath believed? A quotation from Isa. 53:1, from the LXX rather than the Hebrew. The two readings are identical except for the title “Lord,” which does not appear in the Hebrew. See on Isa. 53:1.

39. Could not believe. This statement should be understood in the light of the comment on v. 38. God’s foreknowledge does not preclude free choice. The prophecy of Isaiah was simply a prediction of what God’s foreknowledge had seen would be. “The prophecies do not shape the characters of the men who fulfill them. Men act out their own free will” (EGW RH Nov. 13, 1900). See on Matt. 1:22; John 3:17–20.

40. Blinded their eyes. A quotation from Isa. 6:10, though not agreeing exactly with our present Hebrew and LXX texts. John was probably quoting freely or had before him a variant text. For comment see on Isa. 6:10; Matt. 13:15.

41. When he saw his glory. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 46) for, “because he saw his glory.” In any case the reference seems to be the vision of Isa. 6, in connection with which the words of John 12:40 were spoken.

42. Among the chief rulers. In contrast with the blindness of the nation.

Did not confess. Rather, “continued not to confess.” Nevertheless here was the answer to the question posed some time earlier, “Have any of the rules or of the Pharisees believed on him?” (ch. 7:48). Some later did confess Him openly, as, for example, Nicodemus (ch. 19:39; cf. ch. 3:1) and Joseph of Arimathaea (see on Matt. 27:57).

Put out. See on ch. 9:22.

43. Loved the praise of men. See on Matt. 23:5. The Mishnah has the following, showing the value placed on the praise and honor of men: “Let the honour of thy disciple be as dear to thee as thine own, and the honour of thy colleague as the reverence for thy teacher, and the reverence for thy teacher as the fear of Heaven” (*Aboth*, 4 12, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, pp. 50, 51).

44. Jesus cried. The specific moment of this address, with reference to Jesus’ departure and concealment mentioned in v. 36, is uncertain. Verses 37–50 appear to be John’s comment on the rejection of the Messiah. This day’s teaching in the Temple concluded Christ’s public ministry. Henceforth His teaching was in private to His disciples.

On him that sent me. The clause “that [or, “which”] sent [or, “hath sent”] me” is frequent in John (chs. 5:24, 30, 37; 6:38, 39, 40, 44; etc.). This clause emphasizes the complete unity of the Son with the Father (see on chs. 3:17; 10:30).

45. Him that sent me. Christ came to represent the character of His Father to the world (see on ch. 1:18). When Philip said, “Lord, shew us the Father,” Jesus declared, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (ch. 14:8, 9). The Father and the Son were perfectly united in their aims, purposes, and procedures (see on ch. 10:30).

46. Light. On Jesus the Light see on chs. 1:4; 8:12.

In darkness. See on 1 John 2:11; cf. John 12:35, 36.

47. Not to judge. See on chs. 3:17; 9:39.

48. One that judgeth. Compare ch. 5:45. Here it is not Moses, but the word of Christ, that judges. The fact that the contemporaries of Jesus had heard from Him the truth concerning His identity and mission left them without excuse. They could not claim ignorance as to the requirements for salvation. If they had not heard the truth, they would not have been held responsible (see on ch. 9:39–41). Thus it is with those who hear the Word of God today. Great is the responsibility placed by God upon the hearers! They may ridicule and even despise sermons, but they will find to their sorrow at last that they must give an account of what they of what they have done in view of what they have heard.

49. Of myself. In rejecting the words of Jesus the Jews were rejecting God the Father, whom they professed to worship. Of this, Jesus sought to warn them. Thus it is also when men refuse the words of the messengers but also the One who gave of Heaven. They reject not merely the messengers but also the One who have them their message and sent them forth (see on Matt. 10:40).

50. Life everlasting. See on ch. 3:16. The Father’s commandment was that men should believe in Christ, whom He had sent into the world. Only thus could they be saved (see Acts 4:12). In a parallel statement John declared, “This is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 3:23). The Jews believed that salvation would come to them because they exercised themselves in the study and the observance of the Torah. Many of them rested their hope of eternal life upon their descent from Abraham. Jesus warned that only those who accepted Jesus Christ as the Son of

God, the Saviour of the world, would be saved. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 DA 557
- 1–11 DA 557–568
- 3 ML 80; 6T 84
- 3–6 EW 165, 268; DA 559; 4T 485, 487
- 4, 5 DA 720; 1T 192; 4T 550
- 4–7 4T 42
- 8 DA 640
- 9–11 COL 265
- 12–19 DA 569–579
- 19 DA 571
- 20–23 DA 621
- 20–43 DA 621–626
- 24 COL 86; Ed 110; 6T 186
- 24, 25 DA 623
- 25 DA 626; MYP 302; 9T 56
- 26 Ev 686; MH 226; 2T 40, 148; 6T 312, 415
- 26–28 DA 624
- 28 DA 409; 8T 202
- 28–33 DA 625
- 31 DA 679; 9T 22
- 31, 32 PP 68
- 32 AA 249; CT 434; DA 626; Ed 192; GW 160; MB 9, 44; MYP 137; SC 26; TM 226, 378; 4T 418, 624; 6T 237, 449; 7T 11, 29
- 34–36 DA 626
- 35 FE 215, 450; GC 312; MYP 334; PP 269; TM 163; 1T 262; 3T 63, 65, 230, 436; 8T 143; 9T 154
- 35, 36 CT 369
- 36 CH 40; 3T 50
- 40 DA 626; FE 450
- 42 COL 105; DA 626
- 48 DA 626; 5T 434

CHAPTER 13

4

- 1 *Jesus washeth the disciples' feet: exhorteth them to humility and charity.* 18 *He foretelleth, and discovereth to John by a token, that Judas should betray him:* 31 *commandeth them to love one another, 36 and forewarneth Peter of his denial.*
- 1. Before the feast.** [*Washing the Disciples' Feet, John 13:1–20=Luke 22:24–30.* Major comment: Luke and John.] This incident occurred in connection with the paschal

⁴Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Jn 9:40). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

supper on Thursday night of the Passion Week. For a discussion of the chronological aspects of this supper see Additional Notes on Matthew 26, Note 1.

His hour was come. Earlier in His ministry Jesus had declared that His hour had not yet come (see on ch. 2:4). Now the crisis hour had arrived. This same night He would be betrayed into the hands of His enemies, and before the Jewish day, which began at sunset, should pass, Jesus would rest in Joseph's tomb.

Depart out of this world. Jesus had come from God (see on ch. 1:1, 14), had been sent into the world (see on ch. 3:17), but was not to remain in this world (ch. 16:7). After completing His work upon earth He would return to His Father. These facts John repeatedly emphasizes (see p. 892).

His own. Here the disciples particularly, not the Jewish nation as in ch. 1:11.

In the world. His disciples were "in the world" but not "of" it (ch. 17:11–16).

Unto the end. Gr. *eis telos*, translated in 1 Thess. 2:16 "to the uttermost." The same meaning may apply here, although the literal translation "unto the end" is also apposite to the context.

2. Supper being ended. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between this and the reading "while supper was in progress." A piecing together of information provided by the various gospel writers leads to the conclusion that the latter reading is correct. However, the washing of the feet probably took place early in the meal, in connection with the paschal supper (cf. DA 645, 646; see on Luke 22:24). Not all details of procedure during the Last Supper are noted by the gospel writers; hence it cannot be definitely known at what point during the paschal ritual (see on Matt. 26:21)—if indeed the customary ritual was minutely followed by Jesus on the occasion—the Lord's Supper was introduced (cf. DA 653).

To betray him. See on Matt. 26:14; cf. Luke 22:3.

3. All things. That is, having to do with the plan of salvation (John 17:2; Heb. 2:8; see on Matt. 11:27; John 3:35).

Was come from God. This fact is doubtless to impress the fact that even though Jesus mentioned to show that when Jesus was washing the dusty feet of His disciples He was fully conscious of His divinity. The act was thus supreme demonstration of His humility.

Went to God. See on v. 1.

4. Riseth from supper. It was the custom to recline on a couch during the meal (see on Mark 2:15).

Laid aside his garments. That is, His outer garment, which would impede His movements. See on Matt. 5:40.

Girded himself. The purpose of these acts and of those that followed may be inferred from the account given by Luke regarding the strife for supremacy among the disciples (see on Luke 22:24). Jesus aimed to give an example of humble, unselfish service. He hoped that the practical demonstration would impress His disciples as no mere precept could.

5. Wash the disciples' feet. According to Jewish custom extending back probably to the time of Jesus, the washing of the master's feet was one of the duties of a foreign slave, but was not one expected of a Jewish slave. However, it was a service a wife owed her husband, and children their father. (See Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 2, p. 557). The service was thus regarded as menial. Inasmuch as

no servant was present on the occasion of the Last Supper, one of the disciples should have undertaken the task, but none volunteered.

6. *Dost thou wash my feet?* The emphasis in the Greek is upon the pronouns “thou” and “my”: “Dost *thou* wash *my* feet?” Some commentators suggest that Peter may have drawn up his legs when he spoke these words. The act would be in harmony with his impulsive nature (Matt. 16:22; John 13:37). See on Mark 2:15.

7. *What I do.* The emphasis in the Greek is upon the pronouns “I” and “thou”: “What *I do* thou knowest not now.” The full significance of Jesus’ act would not be understood until later. In the meantime Peter was asked to exercise faith and humbly submit to the Master’s will.

8. *Never wash.* The negative is strongly expressed in the Greek. Such forceful outbursts are characteristic of Peter’s speech (see on v. 6). His words were those of self-confidence and not of humble surrender. He does not wait for the afterknowledge Jesus offered to him.

No part with me. In view of the symbolic significance of the act Jesus was performing, only thus could Peter have part with Christ (see on vs. 12, 15). Furthermore, Peter’s independent spirit and haughty attitude were inconsistent with the character of those who enjoy spiritual fellowship with their Lord in this life and who entertain the hope of enjoying eternal fellowship with Him in the world to come.

9. *Not my feet only.* Another of Peter’s characteristic impetuous outbursts. Realizing that by refusing his Master he faced the prospect of separation from Him, Peter immediately surrendered, but characteristically even now sought to give further advice to his Master. He did not as yet understand the significance of the act.

10. *Washed.* Gr. *louō*, “to bathe.” *Louō* is used of washing the entire body (see Acts 9:37 and in the LXX Ex. 2:5; 29:4; Lev. 14:8, 9; etc.). When only a part of the body is washed the word *niptō* is generally employed, as later in this verse, and in Matt. 6:17; 15:2; etc. Jesus here probably refers to the custom of bathing before attending a feast. When the guests arrived they needed only to have their feet washed. From this the spiritual lesson is evident. The disciples had received spiritual cleansing in the “fountain opened to the house of David ... for sin and for uncleanness” (Zech. 13:1). They had not lapsed into apostasy so as to be in need of a complete recleansing. However, their lives had not been without sin. They had often yielded to Satan’s suggestions. The washing was significant only as it represented removal of sin by sincere repentance and confession.

His feet. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of the words “save” and “his feet,” thus making the passage read, “the one who has been bathed has no need to be washed.” However, both textually and contextually the preponderance of evidence favors retaining the words.

But not all. The reference is to Judas, who had never yielded himself fully to Christ.

11. *For he knew.* Jesus had known this “from the beginning” (ch. 6:64).

Who should betray. Literally, “the one betraying.” The Greek represents the action as already going on, as was, of course, true (see on Matt. 26:14; cf. DA 645).

12. *Taken his garments.* See on v. 4.

Know ye? Part of the significance of the act had already impressed them. Jesus’ example of unselfish service had humbled their pride, but the full spiritual significance of the service was yet to be revealed.

13. *Ye call.* That is, it is your custom to call.

Master. Gr. *didaskalos*, literally meaning, “Teacher” (see on ch. 1:38).

Lord. Gr. *kurios*, a term used both of men (Matt. 6:24 [translated “master”]; etc.) and of Deity (Matt. 1:22; etc.). More commonly *kurios* represented merely a common title of respect corresponding to “sir.” Later, and perhaps at times before the ascension of Jesus (see John 20:28), the word was also used in its fullest sense, ascribing deity to Jesus (see Acts 10:36; Rom. 14:8; etc.). The two titles are here referred to, doubtless to impress the fact that even though Jesus had performed this menial task He was still Teacher and Lord. The service had not detracted from His dignity. See on John 4:11.

14. *Ought.* Gr. *opheilō*, “to be obligated.” *Opheilō* is rendered “to owe” in Matt. 18:28, and “to be duty” in Luke 17:10; Rom. 15:27. Christ’s example of humble service was to be copied by His followers. The service demanded of them was a self-forgetting ministry of love that places the interest and conveniences of self behind and below those of others.

15. *An example.* Jesus was doing more than giving an example of service. He was instituting an ordinance to be observed by His followers to the end of time, an ordinance designed to bring vividly to mind the lessons of the original service. The ordinance has a threefold significance: (1) It symbolizes cleansing from sin. Baptism symbolizes the soul’s original cleansing from sin. The cleansing from the defilements that have subsequently accrued are symbolized by the ordinance of foot washing. As in the case of baptism, the ordinance has no significance whatever unless the participant by repentance and thorough conversion has expelled sin from the life. There is no merit in the act of foot washing itself. Only when there has been the appropriate preliminary preparation does the service assume meaning. (2) It symbolizes a renewed consecration to service. The one who participates and stoops to wash the feet of his brethren thereby indicates that he is willing to engage in the service of the Master no matter how humble that service may be. (3) It typifies the spirit of Christian fellowship. The ordinance is thus a suitable preparatory service to participation in the Lord’s Supper. For a further discussion of the subject see DA 642–651.

16. *Verily.* See on Matt. 5:18; John 1:51.

The servant. Or, “slave.”

Is not greater. If it was not beneath the dignity of the Master to perform a menial service, the servant, or slave, certainly ought not to think it beneath his dignity (cf. on Luke 6:40; see Matt. 10:24; Luke 22:27).

17. *If ye know.* A knowledge of duty places upon man the responsibility of performance. A man is not held responsible for the things of which he is ignorant, provided, of course, that his ignorance is not willful (see John 9:41; 15:22; Rom. 5:13; James 4:17).

Happy. Gr. *makarioi* (see on Matt. 5:3).

If ye do them. Doing is not to be divorced from professing (see Matt. 7:21; Luke 6:46; 12:47; Rom. 2:13; James 1:25).

18. *Not of you all.* The words of blessing spoken in v. 17 do not apply to the entire group. Judas the traitor, is excluded.

I know. Jesus knew the character of each of His disciples, and from the beginning had known that Judas would betray Him (see ch. 6:64). For a discussion of the reasons why he was given a place among the Twelve see on Mark 3:19.

Chosen. See ch. 6:70.

May be fulfilled. Prophecy had not decreed that Judas should betray his Lord. Divine foreknowledge had foreseen what would be (see on ch. 12:39).

He that eateth bread. a quotation from Ps. 41:9 (see comment there).

19. Before it come. If Jesus had not told the disciples beforehand of the defection of Judas, they might have concluded that He had made a mistake in judgment when He permitted Judas to be one of the Twelve. The selection of Judas was an idea, not of Jesus, but of the disciples themselves (see on Mark 3:19). The fulfillment of prophecy is the stamp of validation upon the one uttering the prediction.

I am he. See ch. 8:24.

20. Receiveth me. See Matt. 10:40.

21. Troubled. [*The Betrayer Revealed, John 13:21–30=Matt. 26:21–25=Mark 14:18b–21=Luke 22:21–23.* Major comment: Matthew and John.] See on ch. 12:27.

Verily. See on Matt. 5:18; John 1:51.

Betray me. The announcement is more specific than in vs. 18, 19. Compare Matt. 26:21; Mark 14:18.

22. Doubting. Gr. *aporeō*, “to be at a loss,” “to be perplexed,” as in 2 Cor. 4:8. The disciples were perplexed because they could not understand how any one of the group would betray Jesus.

23. Leaning on Jesus’ bosom. For a discussion of the custom of reclining at banquets see on Mark 2:15. Guests reclined upon their left arms upon cushions especially designed for such occasions. The fact that John rested his head on the bosom of Jesus shows that his position was to the right of Jesus. Leonardo da Vinci’s famous masterpiece, the *Last Supper*, does not correctly represent the way in which the guests reclined at the table.

Whom Jesus loved. John’s favorite designation of himself (see vs. 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). In ch. 20:2 the word for “loved” is *phileō*, whereas in the other passages *agapaō* is used (see on ch. 11:5).

24. Beckoned to him. Some have suggested that Peter occupied the position to the left of Jesus. However, if this had been his position it would have been difficult for him to motion to John. More plausible is the view that Judas occupied this position of importance (cf. DA 644).

26. Sop. Gr. *psōmion*, “a bit,” “a morsel,” perhaps of bread, though some suggest that here it may refer to bitter herbs, a portion of which, according to the Passover ritual, was to be dipped into the relish sauce, or *charoseth* (see on Matt. 26:21, 23).

Judas Iscariot. See on Mark 3:19.

Son of Simon. See on ch. 6:71.

27. Satan. The name occurs only here in John. Elsewhere the apostle calls Satan the “devil” (chs. 8:44; 13:2). For the meaning of the name “Satan” see on Job 1:6; Zech. 3:1; Matt. 4:1.

Entered into him. That is, took complete possession of him. Heretofore there had still been opportunity for Judas to repent, but at this moment he passed the boundary line.

Do quickly. If Jesus, the true Passover Lamb, was to be slain on the day that the regular Passover lambs were slain (see Additional Notes on Matt. 26, Note 1), there was not much time left for Judas to commit his dastardly deed.

28. Knew. Rather, “had come to know,” or “recognized.” The discussion had been concerning betrayal, but there was no necessity of connecting Jesus’ statement to Judas (v. 27) with the betrayal. However, Judas himself understood what Jesus meant.

29. Bag. Gr. *glōssokomon*, “money box” (see on ch. 12:6). Judas was the treasurer of the group.

Against the feast. That is, “for the feast.” The disciples had already provided for their own paschal supper, however the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread still lay ahead. Some who seek to establish the day of the regular Passover feast have advanced the argument that it would have been impossible for Judas to purchase provisions on a festival day. This argument is invalid. The Jews permitted purchases of food on that day, provided the transactions were not conducted in the usual fashion. This is made clear in the usual fashion. This is made clear in the Mishnah: “One may not whet a knife on a Festival, but one may draw it over another knife [to sharpen it]. A man may not say to a butcher, ‘Weigh me a denar’s worth of meat,’ but he slaughters [the animal] and shares it among them. A man may say [on a Festival] to his neighbour, ‘Fill me this vessel,’ but not in a measure. R. Judah says: If it was a measuring-vessel he may not fill it. It is related of Abba Saul b. Batnith that he uses to fill up his measures on the eve of a Festival and give them to his customers on the Festival. Abba Saul says: He used to do so during the intermediary days of a Festival too, on account of the clearness of measure; but the Sages say: He used also to do so on an ordinary day for the sake of the draining of the measures. A man may go to a shopkeeper whom he generally patronizes and say to him: ‘Give me [so many] eggs and nuts, and stating the number; for this is the way of a householder to reckon in his own home’” (*Beṣah* 3. 7, 8, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, pp. 144, 148, 152).

To the poor. The occasion was appropriate for donations to the poor, who might otherwise not be able to provide Passover lambs for the feast.

30. Went immediately out. Judas understood the import of Jesus’ statement (see DA 654). He knew that the Master read his purposes. His decision not to yield took him across the boundary line of his personal probation (see on v. 27). The act of betrayal resulted from his own decision (see on ch. 3:18, 19).

It was night. It was night literally (see 1 Cor. 11:23), for the Passover supper was eaten after sunset. According to the Mishnah the Passover offering must be eaten only during that night, and before midnight (*Zebahim* 5. 8, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 283). But John probably intended to express more than this. It was spiritual night for Judas, who left the presence of the “light of the world” (John 8:12), to be possessed and guided by the prince of darkness (cf. Luke 22:53; see Additional Note on Mark 1).

31. Son of man. [*Parting Counsel, John 13:31 to 14:31.*] See on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10.

Glorified. The exit of Judas was the sign that the betrayal and death of the Son of man were at hand. Jesus would be glorified in the events soon to take place (see chs. 7:39; 12:16, 23, 24). The discourse of chs. 13:31 to 14:31 was given in the upper room prior to the departure to the Mount of Olives (see ch. 14:31; cf. DA 672, 673).

God is glorified. The Father and the Son were working in close harmony for the salvation of the world (see on ch. 10:30). The glory of the one was the glory of the other.

33. Little children. Gr. *teknia*. This term of endearment occurs only here in the Gospel of John, but it is frequent in 1 John (chs. 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21). A similar expression (“my children”) was common in the mouths of Jewish teachers when addressing their pupils (see Talmud *Ta’anith* 21a, Soncino ed., p. 104; *Baba Bathra* 60b, Soncino ed., p. 245; etc.).

A little while. Compare ch. 7:33.

Said unto the Jews. See ch. 8:21.

Ye cannot come. See on ch. 8:22.

34. New commandment. The command to love was not in itself new. It belonged to the instructions given by the Lord through Moses (Lev. 19:18). The injunction is found also in the Mishnah: “Be thou of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, [be thou] one who loveth [one’s fellow-]creatures and bringeth them nigh to the Torah” (*Aboth* 1. 12, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 8). The command was new in that a new demonstration had been given of love, which the disciples were now bidden to emulate. By His revelation of His Father’s character Jesus had opened to men a new concept of the love of God. The new command enjoined men to preserve the same relationship with one another that Jesus had cultivated with them and mankind generally. Where the old commandment enjoined men to love their neighbors as themselves, the new urged them to love as Jesus had loved. The new was, in fact, more difficult than the old, but grace for its accomplishment was freely provided.

Love. Gr. *agapaō*; see on Matt. 5:43, 44. The command reads literally, “keep on loving.”

35. By this. Followers of great teachers reflect the characteristics of their teachers. Love was one of the principal attributes of Jesus. Jesus’ life had been a practical demonstration of love in action. A manifestation of this same kind of love by the disciples of Jesus would give evidence of their relationship and close association with their Master. It is love rather than profession that marks the Christian.

Have love. Literally, “keep on having love.” Constant, fervent manifestations of love, rather than isolated, fitful outbursts of charitableness, are the evidences of discipleship. Paul defines this type of love in 1 Cor. 13. The word there rendered “charity” is the same as the one here translated “love.”

36. Whither goest thou? Peter by-passes comment on the new commandment. Perhaps its requirements were too rigid for his present level of experience. He was, however, interested in Jesus’ reference to a departure, the nature of which he misunderstood (see v. 37), as had the Pharisees earlier (chs. 7:35; 8:22).

Follow me afterwards. The passage probably has a twofold application: (1) Peter’s following Jesus in death. This the disciple was unprepared to do at the moment, as later events clearly indicated (Matt. 26:56, 69–75). However, he later suffered crucifixion for his faith (see John 21:18, 19; cf. AA 537, 538). (2) To Jesus’ ascension to heaven. For this Peter would have to wait until the return of his Lord at the end of the age (ch. 14:1–3). There was probably a purposeful ambiguity in the statement.

37. Why cannot I? For Peter’s characteristic impatience see on Mark 3:16. His impulsive loyalty was unquestionably sincere at the time he spoke but proved altogether

too fickle when put to the test. Well might Peter have pondered the parables of Building a Tower and a King Going to War (see on Luke 14:27–33).

Lay down my life. About 35 years later, in the city of Rome, Peter did lay down his life for his Master. At his own request he was crucified with his head earthward (see AA 537, 538). See on Matt. 26:35.

38. Verily, verily. See on Matt. 5:18; John 1:51.

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- 1 DA 643
- 1–17 DA 642–651
- 3–17 Ev 274–278
- 4, 5 DA 644; EW 116; 4T 374
- 6, 7 DA 645
- 7 LS 37; MH 487; ML 184; 1T 30
- 8–10 DA 646
- 10 DA 649
- 11 DA 653, 655, 656
- 12–16 DA 649
- 12–17 DA 650
- 15 DA 651; Ed 78; MH 500
- 15–17 Ev 275
- 16 GW 190; 3T 229; 5T 502
- 17 COL 272; DA 651
- 18 DA 654
- 18, 19 DA 655
- 18–30 DA 652–661
- 20 4T 196
- 21–25 DA 654
- 23 Ed 87
- 27 DA 654, 717; 5T 103
- 30 DA 654
- 31 1T 352
- 31, 33 DA 662
- 34 AA 547, 550; COL 144, 382; CS 23; CW 79; DA 504, 677; Ed 242; Ev 293, 638; EW 27; FE 51, 281; MB 134; MH 162; ML 185, 192; SL 81; TM 354; 1T 151; 3T 187, 248; 4T 648; 6T 16, 284; 7T 265; 8T 241
- 34, 35 MM 120; 8T 165; 9T 219
- 35 DA 678; ML 80; 1T 165; 5T 167, 489; 6T 401; 7T 156; 9T 188
- 36, 37 DA 815
- 37 DA 673

CHAPTER 14

- 1 *Christ comforteth his disciples with the hope of heaven: 6 professeth himself the way, the truth, and the life, and one with the Father: 13 assureth their prayers in his name to be effectual: 15 requesteth love and obedience, 16 promiseth the Holy Ghost the Comforter, 27 and leaveth his peace with them.*

1. Let not your heart be troubled. Or, “stop letting your heart be troubled.” The disciples were troubled because Jesus had announced that He would soon leave them (ch.

13:33). He now proceeded to tell them that His absence would be only temporary, and that His departure would be for their benefit. Chapter 14 continues the conversational sequence begun in ch. 13:31 (see comment there).

Ye believe. Gr. *pisteuete*, which may be translated either “ye believe,” or “believe,” as in the next clause. In form *pisteuete* may be either imperative (believe [ye]) or indicative (ye believe). In Greek the imperative and indicative forms in the tense here employed are identical. Hence the context must determine the choice of mood. This allows for several possible combinations: (1) both verbs imperative, “Believe in God, believe also in me”; (2) both verbs indicative, “Ye believe in God and ye believe also in me”; (3) the first verb indicative and the second imperative, as in the KJV; (4) the first imperative and the second indicative, “believe in God and ye believe in me”; this last combination makes for a somewhat awkward construction and is the least likely of the four, but the other three are entirely consistent with the context. When the first element is regarded as imperative the admonition is in harmony with instruction earlier given to “have faith in God” (Mark 11:22).

The discourse of ch. 14 was given in the upper room prior to the departure to the Mount of Olives and Gethsemane (see on ch. 13:31).

2. My Father’s house. A beautiful representation of heaven. The word for “house” (Gr. *oikia*) may also be translated “home.” It is thus rendered in Matt. 8:6. The masculine form, *oikos*, is translated “home” in Mark 5:19; Luke 15:6; 1 Cor. 11:34; 14:35. Jesus was returning to His home. Eventually the disciples would be permitted to join Him there.

Mansions. Gr. *monai* (singular *monē*) literally, “abiding places.” In non-Biblical Greek literature the word sometimes has the meaning of temporary stopping places. From this concept Origen drew his false notion that the mansions were halting places in the soul’s journey to God (see *De Principiis* ii. 11. 6). But such is not the scriptural meaning of *monai*. This is clear from v. 23, the only other occurrence of the word in the Bible. Certainly the abode of Christ and the Father with the Christian is no temporary affair. The idea of permanence in *monē* is reflected in 1 Macc. 7:38, the only occurrence of the word in the LXX.

Our English word “mansion” is from the Latin *mansio*, in meaning almost equivalent to the Gr. *monē*. *Mansio*, as does *monē*, means “a remaining place,” “a place of abode.” The idea of a building of some size or pretentiousness does not attach to the Latin, nor, of course, to the Greek. That idea was a later development of the English word and the meaning should not be introduced into the present verse. Either “mansion” should be understood in its archaic sense of “a dwelling place,” or “abode,” or one of these meanings should be substituted in a translation of the verse.

The fact that there are “many” dwelling places makes certain of sufficient room in the Father’s house for all who heed the Father’s invitation.

I go. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the insertion before “I go” of the Greek conjunction *hoti*, meaning, “for,” “that,” or “because.” If it is omitted there is a complete stop after the preceding clause, as in the KJV. If it is included there is some question as to

how the clause that it introduces should be connected to the preceding. Several translations are possible: (1) "If it were not so I would have told you that I go to prepare a place for you." This translation is ruled out because, according to v. 3, such was one of the objects of Jesus' departure. (2) "If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?" This translation overcomes the difficulty of No. 1, but introduces a new problem in that there is no record of Jesus' having told His disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them. It is, of course, possible that such a statement was simply left unrecorded. (3) "There are many abiding places (and if it were not so I would have told you), for I go to prepare a place for you" (see C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, on ch. 14:2). If textual evidence is held to be in favor of including the *hoti*, the last translation seems to be the most natural. However, the text is perfectly intelligible if the conjunction is omitted.

These words were designed to comfort the disciples. Jesus was leaving, but He would not forget them. He would eagerly anticipate His reunion with them in the Father's house. In the interval He would prepare for the glorious home-coming.

3. *If I go.* This conditional clause was not intended to introduce an uncertainty. The word translated "if" (*ean*) here has temporal force, and should probably be translated "when," as in 1 Cor. 14:16; 1 John 3:2.

I will come again. The Greek expresses this promise in the present tense. This so-called futuristic present gives emphasis to the certainty of the event. The event is thought of as being so certain as to be already taking place. The reference is clearly to the personal advent of Jesus vividly described a few days earlier in answer to the question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (see on Matt. 24:1–3; see vs. 30, 31).

Receive. Gr. *paralambanō*, literally, "to receive to the side of" (see on Matt. 24:40).

Where I am. The disciples were directed to the time of the second advent as the moment when they would be reunited with their Lord. There is no hint here of the popular doctrine that believers go to be with their Lord at the time of death. Nor is this doctrine upheld elsewhere in the Scriptures. Paul also directed the attention of believers to the time of the second advent as the moment of grand reunion (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

Jesus has gone to His Father's house. He is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When His image shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come (COL 69). It is our privilege to hasten the day of glorious home-coming (2 Peter. 3:12; cf. DA 633, 634; COL 69).

4. *Whither I go ye know.* The disciples had been told, and ought to have understood. They had been under the Saviour's instruction for more than three years (see p. 193). In fact, Jesus had just now informed them that He was going to His Father (v. 2), though He had earlier informed them (see ch. 7:33). But preconceived opinion made it difficult for the disciples to grasp the full import of much of Jesus' instruction.

The way ye know. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between this and the reading, "And you know the way where I am going" (RSV). However, the latter involves a grammatical difficulty in the Greek. Hence the reading of the KJV is probably to be preferred. Jesus had made plain the way to the Father's house, but dullness of comprehension prevented the disciples from grasping the full import of His words.

5. Thomas. For a character sketch of Thomas see on Mark 3:18. His doubting spirit and slowness of heart to believe are clearly revealed in his question.

We know not. They should have known, for they had been clearly told (see on v. 4). It was hard for them to divest themselves of the Jewish concept of the Messianic kingdom (see on Matt. 16:22; Luke 4:19).

6. I am the way. Another of the famous “I am” sayings of Jesus (see on ch. 6:35; see chs. 8:12; 10:7, 11; 11:25). For the use of the expression “I am” without the pronoun “he” see on ch. 8:24.

Christ is the way from earth to heaven. By His humanity He touches this earth, and by His divinity He touches heaven. He is the ladder connecting earth and heaven (ch. 1:51; cf. PP 184). Because of His incarnation and death “a new and living way” has been consecrated for us (Heb. 10:20). There is no other means of salvation (Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5).

Truth. See on ch. 8:32.

Life. See on chs. 1:4; 8:51; 10:10.

7. If ye had known me. Compare ch. 8:19. The construction in the Greek shows the condition here expressed to be contrary to fact. The disciples had not known Him. If they had, they would have known Him whom Christ came to reveal (see on ch. 1:18).

From henceforth. Or, “from now.” The death of Christ would be an important step in the revelation of the Father. The subsequent revelations of the Spirit would further unveil the divine character (chs. 14:26; 15:26; 16:13, 14). Of Christians near the close of the 1st century John wrote, “Ye have known the Father” (1 John 2:13).

8. Philip. For a character sketch of Philip see on Mark 3:18.

Shew us the Father. Perhaps Philip hoped for a revelation of divine glory such as was given to Moses (Ex. 33:18–23).

9. Have I been? It was disappointing to Jesus to have His disciples so dull of comprehension. Yet He dealt patiently with their ignorance.

Hath seen the Father. On Christ’s revealing to men the character of God see on ch. 1:18.

10. In the Father. Jesus had earlier stressed His unity with the Father (see on ch. 10:30).

The words. The words and works of Jesus both bore testimony to His divinity. The disciples should have believed the word of Jesus. If this was difficult for them, they should have accepted His word on the basis of His works.

11. Believe me. The Greek verb is plural, showing that Jesus now addresses all the disciples.

Works’ sake. See on v. 10.

12. Verily. See on Matt. 5:18; John 1:51.

Greater works. That is, greater in quantity rather than quality. Christ’s activity had extended over a relatively small area (of the world). After the ascension the gospel would spread to all parts of the world.

Because I go. After His departure He would send the Holy Spirit (v. 16; ch. 16:7), who would endue the disciples with power (Luke 24:49). As a result of the Pentecostal outpouring, and subsequent ones, the gospel was heralded with great power, so that about 40 years later Paul could say that the gospel was “preached to every creature which is under heaven” (Col. 1:23; cf. DA 633).

13. *Whatsoever ye shall ask.* As the disciples would cooperate with Heaven in the promulgation of the gospel, they could rest assured that the boundless resources of Omnipotence were at their disposal. God would supply their every need and honor the petitions lodged before the throne in the name of Jesus.

In my name. For the significance of praying in the name of Jesus see DA 667, 668. Compare chs 14:26; 15:16; 16:23, 24.

That will I do. The fact that men are to petition the Father in the name of Jesus, but that Jesus is the one who brings about the answer, emphasizes the oneness of the Son with the Father. In chs. 15:16; 16:23 the Father is said to answer the petitions presented before Him.

14. *If ye shall ask.* As this verse reads in the KJV it is an emphatic repetition of the promise of v. 13. However, textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the insertion of the pronoun “me” after the verb “ask.” This reading would imply that petitions may be directed to Jesus as well as to the Father, as chs 15:16; 16:23 indicate. There are several NT examples of prayers directed to Jesus (Acts 7:59; Rev. 22:20). However, the expression “ask me any thing in my name” is awkward, and hence the reading that includes the pronoun “me” should probably be rejected.

I will do it. The “I” is emphatic in the Greek, whereas in v. 13 it is not.

15. *If ye love me.* Love is the motive power of obedience. For a definition of “love” see on Matt. 5:43, 44; 1 Cor. 13:1. Obedience that springs from compulsion or from fear is not the ideal form of obedience. There may be times, of course, where the motive power of love is lacking or weak. It is necessary under those circumstances to render obedience from principle alone. In the meantime love should be cultivated. A lack of the requisite love should never be made an excuse for disobedience. One of the best human illustrations of obedience that springs from love is that of children to their parents.

Keep my commandments. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between this and the reading “you will keep my commandments.” In the latter reading the Greek verb is in the future tense, which may also be translated as an imperative, as in Matt. 22:37, 39. If translated thus, there is little difference between the readings. However, the indicative “you will keep” brings out the significant thought that obedience is the natural result of love. The parallel statement in John 14:23 is clearly in the indicative mood, and hence supports this thought.

The commandments of Jesus were also the commandments of the Father, for Jesus spake not of Himself (chs. 12:49; 14:10). He endorsed the moral commands given to ancient Israel (see on Matt. 5:17–19) and magnified them (see on Isa. 42:21). He gave commands of His own, such as the new commandment (John 13:34), not to replace any of the moral precepts, which reflected the character of the unchangeable God, but to set forth their true meaning and to show how their principles should be applied to various life situations.

16. *Another.* Gr. *allos*, “another of the same kind.” Jesus Himself was a Comforter (see 1 John 2:1, where “advocate” is the translation of the word here rendered “Comforter”; see below under “Comforter”). He would leave His disciples (John 13:33), but He would petition the Father to send One who was like Him to remain with the disciples, not temporarily, as He had remained, but “for ever.”

Comforter. Gr. *paraklētos*, a word used in the NT only by John (here; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2:1). It is made up of the preposition *para*, meaning, “beside,” and the adjective *klētos*, “called,” or “one called.” Hence the literal meaning is “one called to the side of.” However, in Scripture usage the word seems to reflect more of an active sense such as is found in the corresponding verb *parakaleō*, “to exhort,” “to comfort,” hence, “one who exhorts” (see John 16:8). The Latin Fathers translated *paraklētos* by *advocatus*, but the technical meaning, “advocate,” or “lawyer,” applies to only a few of the rare occurrences of the word in pre-Christian and non-Christian literature. The word “advocate” is not entirely appropriate to describe the work of either the Holy Spirit or Christ. The Father and Son work in the fullest cooperation for the salvation of man (ch. 10:30). It is Satan’s work to present the Father as stern and harsh and unwilling to forgive the sinner, and as willing to forgive only upon the intercession of the Son. It is true that the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ made forgiveness possible. But both the Father and the Son love the sinner and work in unison for his salvation. An advocate in the human sense of the term is not needed to induce the Father to have mercy on the sinner. He who desires to learn of the love and compassion of the Father need but look at the Son (see on ch. 1:18). Elsewhere in pre-Christian and non-Christian literature *paraklētos* retains the more general meaning of “one who stands up in behalf of another,” “a mediator,” “an intercessor,” “a helper.” See on Matt. 5:4.

The verb *parakaleō*, though translated “to comfort” 23 times in the NT, is also rendered “exhort” 19 times. To call the Holy Spirit a “Comforter” is to emphasize but one feature of His work. He is also an “Exhorter.” In fact, this latter meaning is the prominent feature of the work of the Spirit as outlined by John. He will “teach” and “bring all things to ... remembrance” (ch. 14:26). He will testify of Christ (ch. 15:26). He will “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (ch. 16:8). He will guide into all truth and show things to come (ch. 16:13). He will glorify Christ and receive from Him and impart to the disciples (ch. 16:14).

For ever. Not temporarily, like Christ during His earthly ministry.

17. Spirit of truth. This expression occurs again in chs. 15:26; 16:13. The emphasis seems to be upon the fact that the Spirit defines, imparts, and defends truth. For a definition of truth see on ch. 8:32. The Spirit would guide the disciples “into all truth” (ch. 16:13).

World. Gr. *kosmos* (see on Matt. 4:8).

Seeth him not. The pronoun “him” refers to the Spirit, as is clearly evident in the Greek. The world lacks spiritual perception. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:14).

Neither knoweth him. If the disciples at Ephesus baptized “unto John’s baptism” had “not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost” (Acts 19:1–3), much less would the world have any knowledge concerning Him. The world neither knew of His existence nor recognized His call to repentance (see Gen. 6:3; Rev. 22:17).

Ye. The pronoun is emphatic in the Greek. The disciples are strongly contrasted with the world.

With you. That is, with the church. The phrase “in you” emphasizes the indwelling of the Spirit in the hearts of individual Christians.

18. Comfortless. From the Gr. *orphanos*, properly, “bereft of parents.” Our English word “orphan” comes to us through the Latin from this Greek word. *Orphanos* is common in the LXX for the Heb. *yatom*, “fatherless,” or “fatherless children” (Ex. 22:22, 24; Deut. 10:18; etc.). In the NT *orphanos* occurs elsewhere only in James 1:27, where it is translated “fatherless.” In John 14:18 the idea is that Jesus would not leave the disciples bereft of their Master. He would come to them. The reference here is not to the second coming (vs. 1–3), but to Christ’s presence with His disciples through the Spirit.

19. A little while. Compare chs. 13:33; 16:16–22.

But ye see me. After the crucifixion and burial the world would see Jesus no more. But the disciples would see Him in His resurrected body. The words doubtless have also a spiritual significance. Even after the ascension the disciples would continue to see Jesus with their spiritual faculties.

Ye shall live. Both in a spiritual and in a literal sense (ch. 6:57).

20. At that day. That is, the day when the “Comforter” would come and abide with them (see v. 16). There were many things in the spiritual realm that the disciples did not at present understand. These would later be made plain to them.

I am in my Father. Compare v. 11.

Ye in me. See on ch. 15:4.

21. Hath my commandments. That is, knows and understands them. But this is not sufficient. It is necessary also to keep them. A conviction of Christian duty must be followed by prompt obedience.

Loveth me. This statement is the converse of v. 15. Love manifests itself in obedience; obedience is a mark of love (cf. 1 John 2:3–6).

Loved of my Father. Compare ch. 16:27. In ch. 3:16 the Father’s love for the world was emphasized. Here His love for His own is highlighted. Where there is a response to divine love there can be a greater manifestation of that love. Satan had led men to look upon God as severe and unforgiving. Jesus had come to alter that concept. He taught men that His Father’s love was like His own.

Manifest myself. Probably primarily a reference to the fuller revelation of Christ through the Spirit.

22. Judas. Generally identified as Lebbaeus (Matt. 10:3) or Thaddaeus (Mark 3:18), though the identification is not entirely certain (see on Mark 3:18).

Saith unto him. The discourse in the upper room has been marked by frequent interruptions (see chs. 13:36; 14:5, 8).

Not Iscariot. Judas Iscariot had left the upper room some time before this (ch. 13:30).

Not unto the world. Judas doubtless had in mind a visible manifestation of glory such as was expected to attend the advent of the Messiah. It was apparently disappointing to him that the manifestation was to be made to only a few. He did not grasp Christ’s reference to the kingdom of grace, which was to precede the kingdom of glory. In common with his Jewish compatriots he doubtless shared the hope that the Messiah would manifest Himself in judgment over the Gentiles and in the re-establishment of the spiritual theocracy.

23. If a man love me. Jesus does not answer Judas' question directly. He calls attention to the conditions upon which the manifestation to which He referred (see on v. 22) will be made to the individual believer.

Words. Literally, "word," here synonymous with "commandments" (see vs. 15, 21).

We will come. The plural emphasizes the oneness of the Father and the Son. They "come," here, to dwell mystically in the heart of the believer. Thus there is a oneness not only between the Father and the Son but between the Father, the Son, and the believer (see TM 519).

Abode. Gr. *monē* (see on v. 2).

24. Loveth me not. The converse of the statement in v. 23. The world could not enjoy the fellowship here brought to view. The Father and the Son do not force their company upon anyone.

Sayings. Literally, "words," synonymous with "commandments" (cf. on v. 23).

Not mine. Compare ch. 7:16; see on ch. 4:34.

25. Present with you. That is, in the flesh, before His departure and before the coming of the other "Comforter" (v. 16). Jesus was limited as to the information He could impart to them at the present time (ch. 16:12).

26. Comforter. Gr. *paraklētos* (see on v. 16).

Holy Ghost. Rather, "Holy Spirit." "Ghost" is an obsolete form of "Spirit." The expression "Holy Ghost" occurs 89 times in the NT, and the expression "Holy Spirit" 4 times. Both are translations of the same Greek phrase. The word "Spirit" without the qualifying adjective is frequent.

He. Literally, "that one." The antecedent is "Comforter," which in the Greek is masculine and hence calls for the personal pronoun "he."

Teach you all things. One of the principal functions of the Holy Spirit is teaching. Much of Jesus' work was teaching (see on Luke 4:15). Forty-one times the word "Master" in the NT is from the Gr. *didaskalos*, meaning, "teacher." For three years the disciples had been under the instruction of the Master Teacher, but there were still many things for them to learn. They were unable in their present state of mind to comprehend many of the truths (John 16:12). They would need further instruction, and this the Holy Spirit would give to them. The Spirit of God knows the "things of God" and "searcheth all things, year, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10, 11), and He is able to impart them to men who are willing to be instructed.

To your remembrance. Not only would the Spirit reveal new truths; He would also call to mind truths that had slipped from the mind, of those things Jesus had taught, or of those things that had earlier been revealed in the Scriptures of truth. In moments of crisis, such as when the disciples would be haled into court, the Spirit would bring the appropriate ideas into mind (Matt 10:19, 20). When asked to give a reason for the hope that is in them (1 Peter 3:15), Christians who have been diligent students of the Bible may have the confidence that the Holy Spirit will call to mind passages suited to the occasion.

27. Peace. Gr. *eirēnē*, corresponding to the Heb. *shalom*, the common Oriental greeting used by Jesus in His postresurrection appearances (ch. 20:19, 21, 26). Here Jesus speaks of inward peace of soul such as comes to him who is "justified by faith" (Rom. 5:1), whose sense of guilt has been laid at the foot of the cross, and whose anxieties about

the future have been swallowed up in his implicit trust in God (Phil. 4:6, 7). Such a peace Jesus terms “my peace.” Such a peace the world, with all its boasted science, cannot bestow. Compare John 16:33.

Troubled. Compare v. 1.

Be afraid. Gr. *deiliaō*, “to be fainthearted, to be cowardly.”

28. I go away. See vs. 2, 3; cf. ch. 7:33.

Come again. See vs. 3, 18.

If ye loved me. The disciples loved Jesus, but not with the fullness of love with which they would have loved Him had they more fully understood Him and His mission.

Ye would rejoice. Had the disciples understood more fully the humiliation of Jesus in His incarnation, and also more fully His exaltation to follow His resurrection, and had they contemplated more fully the loneliness of Jesus during His separation from the Father, they would have rejoiced at the fact that He was returning to His Father. Furthermore, had they understood that the departure of Jesus would be to their own advantage (ch. 16:7), and that His ascension and mediation in the heavenly sanctuary was an important step in the working out of the plan of salvation, they would have further rejoiced. At the moment their thoughts seemed to be selfishly concentrated on themselves. They were fearful as they contemplated meeting life’s problems without the bodily presence of their Master.

My Father is greater than I. With reference to His preincarnation state the Scriptures declare that Christ “thought it not robbery to be equal with God” (Phil. 2:6; see on John 1:1–3). Yet He “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant” (Phil. 2:7; cf. Heb. 2:9; see Additional Note on John 1). However, even in His incarnation Jesus declared that He was one with the Father (John 10:30). Any inferiority the statement in ch. 14:28 seems to assign to Christ should be understood with reference to His incarnation, for after the crucifixion God highly exalted Him, and gave Him a name that is above every name (Phil. 2:9). He was “equal with the Father” (8T 268). See further on 1 Cor. 15:27, 28.

29. Ye might believe. Jesus knew that the events of the immediate future would throw the disciples into great perplexity, as would the trials they would meet in their later evangelism. Hence He sought to forewarn them, that they might be forearmed (see on ch. 13:19).

30. Prince of this world. For this title see on ch. 12:31.

Cometh. A reference to approaching events—Gethsemane, the arrest, trial, condemnation, and crucifixion of the Son of man, in which the prince of this world would make his supreme effort to defeat the plan of salvation. But Jesus drank the cup to the bitter end, and when He declared, “It is finished” (ch. 19:30), the death knell of the prince of darkness was sounded. Satan had found nothing in Jesus that responded to his sophistry (see DA 123).

31. That the world may know. There is an ellipsis here, and some such words as “these things are taking place that the world may know, etc.,” should be supplied. The purpose clause may also be understood as a clause of result (see on ch. 9:3); that is, as a result of the events about to take place the world would be given a demonstration of Jesus’ love for the Father.

Arise, let us go hence. After Jesus and His disciples “had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives” (Matt. 26:30). The hymn was part of the Passover Hallel

(see on Matt. 26:30). Many scholars think that the discourse of John 15; 16 and the prayer of ch. 17 were also given in the upper room, but there is no need to suppose a transposition in these chapters. The instruction of these chapters would have been as appropriate or even more so among the scenes of nature on the way to Gethsemane, especially with flourishing grapevines to illustrate the allegory of the vine and its branches (see DA 674). The slopes of Olivet had been the scene of extended instruction only two nights before (see on Matt. 24:1).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 MH 123; WM 22
- 1–3 GC 301; LS 293; 8T 254
- 1–4 AA 21
- 1–9 DA 663
- 1–10 MH 419; 8T 266
- 1–31 DA 662–673
- 2 AH 120, 146, 287; EW 18; GW 259; ML 84, 337, 338; MM 327; MYP 410; SR 430; 8T 140
- 2, 3 CSW 79; EW 190; GC 548; LS 50; 1T 41; 4T 490; 5T 732; 6T 368
- 3 AA 34, 536; CH 213; COL 40; DA 832; GC 339; TM 130
- 5–8 DA 293
- 6 CE 63; COL 40, 105, 173; CSW 85; CW 120; DA 24, 353; Ev 290; FE 239, 251, 399, 405, 466; GW 154, 263; ML 260; MM 22, 327; SC 21; TM 105, 332; 2T 170; 3T 193; 4T 230, 316; 5T 49; 6T 67; 7T 38; 8T 210
- 7 TM 123
- 8, 9 SC 11; 5T 739
- 9, 10 TM 123
- 9–11 MH 32
- 10 SC 75
- 11, 12 DA 664
- 12 AA 22; WM 297
- 12–14 DA 667
- 13 AA 28; COL 148; ML 18; 8T 23, 177
- 13, 14 COL 111
- 13–15 EW 29
- 14 MH 226; GC 477
- 14, 15 FE 399
- 14–21 DA 377–382
- 15 COL 143, 283; DA 668; FE 125
- 15–17 5T 432
- 15–19 TM 137
- 16 MH 249; TM 218, 517; 8T 19
- 16, 17 AA 47; ML 36
- 16–18 DA 669
- 17 DA 494, 671; SC 74
- 18 TM 517; 8T 19
- 19 MH 244; ML 295; TM 95
- 21 AA 85; COL 143, 283; CS 346; DA 669; FE 125, 399; MYP 409; TM 68, 137

21–245T 432

23 COL 61; TM 169

23, 24 FE 125; TM 137

24 COL 139, 283

26 AA 52; CH 371, 561; CSW 39, 41, 160; CT 357, 450; DA 670; Ed 94; FE 433, 473; GC viii, 600; ML 45; MYP 259; PK 627; TM 111, 476; 6T 249; 8T 19

27 AA 84; DA 659, 672; MB 16; MH 123, 247; ML 77, 176; SC 124

29 9T 235

30 CD 153; DA 123, 679; GC 623; Te 286; 5T 293, 422

CHAPTER 15

1 *The consolation and mutual love between Christ and his members, under the parable of the vine.* 18 *A comfort in the hatred and persecution of the world.* 26 *The office of the Holy Ghost, and of the apostles.*

1. I am. [*The True Vine*, John 15:1–17.] Another of the famous ‘I am’ sayings of Jesus (see on ch. 6:20; cf. chs. 8:12; 10:7, 11; 11:25; 14:6). For the meaning of “I am” without the pronoun “he” see on ch. 8:24.

True. Gr. *alēthinos*, “genuine.” In Bible imagery Israel had been likened to a vine (Ps. 80:8–16; Isa. 5:1–7; 27:2, 3; Jer. 2:21; 12:10). A golden vine decorated the entrance to Herod’s Temple (see Mishnah *Middoth* 3. 8, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 15), and figures of the leaves of the vine or of clusters of grapes were displayed on coins and architecture. The Jews depended upon their connection with the vine of Israel for their salvation. But Israel had proved unfaithful to its spiritual advantages and had rejected its true king, Jesus. Now Jesus presented Himself as the genuine vine. Only through vital connection with Him could men be saved.

Husbandman. Gr. *geōrgos*, “a worker of the soil,” here, a vinedresser. Compare the use of *geōrgos* in Luke 20:9; 2 Tim. 2:6; James 5:7. Earlier God had taken “a vine out of Egypt” (Ps. 80:8) and had planted it in the land of Canaan. Now He took another vine, His own Son, and planted Him in the land of Israel (see DA 675).

2. Every branch. The disciples are represented as the branches of the vine. As the branches are dependent upon their connection with the stock for life and productiveness, so the Christian is dependent upon union with Christ for spiritual life and fruitfulness.

Beareth not fruit. He who professes to be in Christ is expected to bring forth fruits appropriate to his profession. These fruits are elsewhere termed “the fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9), or “fruits of righteousness” Phil. 1:11; cf. Heb. 12:11), that is, fruits which are righteousness. These fruits are evident in the character and the life. When these “good fruits” (James 3:17) are absent it becomes necessary to sever the fruitless branch.

Taketh away. Gr. *airō* (see below under “Purgeth”).

Purgeth. Gr. *kathairō*, “to cleanse,” in this case, by removing superfluous growth. There is a word play in the Greek in the words for “taketh away” (*airō*) and “purgeth” (*kathairō*) that cannot be reproduced in English. The character is “purged” by the tests and trials of life. The Father, the heavenly Husbandman, oversees the process. And though the “chastening” may seem to be grievous, “nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Heb. 12:11).

More fruit. There can be no life without growth. As long as there is life there is need of continual development. Character development is the work of a lifetime (see COL 65, 66). See on Matt. 5:48.

3. Now. Gr. *ēdē*, “already,” “now.”

Ye are clean. See on ch. 13:10.

Through the word. Rather, “on account of the word.” The disciples had responded to the word of salvation brought to them by Jesus (cf. on ch. 12:48).

4. Abide in me. A continuous abiding in a living connection with Christ is essential for growth and fruitfulness. Occasional attention to matters of religion is not sufficient. Riding high on a wave of religious fervor one day, only to fall low into a period of neglect the next, does not promote spiritual strength. To abide in Christ means that the soul must be in daily, constant communion with Jesus Christ and must live *His* life (Gal. 2:20). It is not possible for one branch to depend upon another for its vitality; each must maintain its own personal relationship to the vine. Each member must bear its own fruits.

5. Without me. “The carnal mind ... is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7). It is impossible for man in his own strength to escape from the pit of sin into which he has fallen and to bring forth fruits unto holiness (see SC 18). Wherever men hold to the principle that they can save themselves by their own works they have no barrier against sin (see DA 35, 36).

6. If a man abide not. The delusion, “once in grace always in grace,” is denied by this condition. It is possible for those who have been in Christ to sever their connection with Him and be lost (see on Heb. 6:4–6. Salvation is conditional upon abiding in Christ until the end.

Is withered. The Christian represented by the severed branch may carry on a form of religion, but the vital power is lacking (2 Tim. 3:5). Under test and trial the shallowness of his profession is seen. As the severed branches are eventually gathered and burned, so the unfruitful Christian, along with the nonprofessor, will suffer ultimate extinction (Matt. 10:28; 13:38–40; 25:41, 46). No overt act of disobedience is mentioned, simply the sin of neglect. Compare the parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matt. 25:31–46). Those to the left of the King were excluded from the kingdom for neglect of practical Christian duty.

7. If ye abide in me. The abiding is mutual as expressed in v. 4. As men abide in Christ, Christ dwells in them and they become partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). Their thoughts become so identified with the divine will that only such requests are made as are in harmony with that will (see 1 John 5:14; DA 668). Furthermore, no sin intervenes to prevent a favorable answer.

My words abide. These words show that the indwelling of Christ is not wholly a mystical, inexplicable experience. Men receive Christ by receiving His word. As they feed upon that word it enlightens the mind. And as they make an intelligent choice to follow that word and obey it implicitly through the enabling power of Heaven, Christ, the hope of glory, is formed within (Col. 1:27). Furthermore, for this experience to be constant they feed daily upon the word. See on John 6:53.

8. Bear much fruit. It is glory to a vinedresser when his plants bear well. Thus glory comes to God when His image is reflected in the lives of His followers. Satan claims that the requirements of God are too severe and that men cannot attain to the ideal of

Christian perfection. Thus the character of God is vindicated when men, through divine grace, become partakers of the divine nature.

Be my disciples. The reflection of the Christian graces is evidence of discipleship. Without a vital connection with Christ it impossible to bring forth the fruits of righteousness (v. 5; ch. 13:35).

9. Father hath loved me. Compare chs. 3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 17:24.

In my love. To abide in Christ means to abide in the shelter of His love. It is comforting to know Christ's love for us is as abiding as the Father's love for the Son. More than that, "the Father himself loveth you" (ch. 16:27) with the same love with which He loves the Son (EGW RH Nov. 4, 1890).

10. My commandments. See on ch. 14:15.

Father's commandments. Looking back Jesus could say with perfect confidence, "I have kept my Father's commandments." He did always those things that pleased His Father (ch. 8:29). He "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). His sinless life proved that it was possible for men with divine help to keep the commandments (see DA 24).

11. My joy. The joy of Christ lay in the consciousness of a successfully accomplished mission. The Saviour had joy in carrying out the divine purpose in man's redemption and in enduring that men might be saved. His purpose in life was to glorify His Father.

Your joy. Joy is the second of the graces of the Spirit listed by Paul (Gal. 5:22). True joy is not found in noisy laughter or in giddy excitement caused by the world's shallow pleasures. The Christian finds his joy in resting in the love of Christ, in victories won, and in unselfish service for humanity. Joy will reach its highest realization in the world to come, but a high degree of joy may be experienced here and now by those who abide in Christ.

12. My commandments. See on ch. 13:34.

13. Greater love. The "new commandment" (ch. 13:34; cf. ch. 15:12) enjoined the disciples to exercise the same love toward one another that Jesus had manifested toward them. The extent of that love Jesus now revealed. That love led Him to lay down His life for them. However, His love exceeded that which He now commends: "While we were yet sinners" He died for us (see Rom. 5:6–8).

Friends. See on v. 14.

14. Friends. Gr. *philoī*, singular *philos*, related to the verb *phileō*, "to love" (see on Matt. 5:43, 44). *Philos* means one beloved or dear, or one who is loving or friendly. In true friendship there is reciprocal love. The disciples would show their love by humble obedience (John 14:15).

15. Servants. Gr. *douloi*, singular *doulos*, often designating "slave," here, perhaps, a servant with restricted status (see on ch. 8:34). A servant of this rank would be expected to obey blindly without being taken into the master's counsels. Jesus had taken the disciples into His confidence and had revealed many things to them. The Holy Spirit would further enlighten them (ch. 14:26). Jesus was soon to leave them, and they were to labor on without His bodily presence. A weighty responsibility would be theirs. He wanted them to think of their relationship with Him as that of friends. Before, He had implied that they were servants (see ch. 13:16); now they were His friends.

16. *Ye have not chosen me.* The disciples had chosen to be followers of Christ, but it was Jesus who from His many followers had selected twelve to be apostles (Luke 6:13; see on Mark 3:14). All may choose to follow Christ, but it is He who chooses and qualifies men to occupy positions of responsibility and leadership in His cause (1 Cor. 12:7–11, 28).

Bring forth fruit. That is, be successful in their mission.

Your fruit should remain. Compare ch. 4:36.

Whatsoever ye shall ask. Compare ch. 14:13. The condition for answered prayer is to abide in Christ.

In my name. See on ch. 14:13.

17. *Love one another.* See on ch. 13:34; cf. ch. 15:12.

18. *If the world hate you.* [*A Warning of Persecution*, John 15:18 to 16:4.] There would be hatred from the world, but among the inner group there ought to be love (v. 17). They would have sufficient to endure from the bitter conflict with the world, without adding to the antagonism from without (Luke 22:24). The world hates those whose sympathies and interests are at variance with it (see on ch. 7:7).

It hated me. The full fury of the world's hatred the disciples were yet to see.

19. *If ye were.* The condition is unfulfilled according to the construction in the Greek. They had been of the world but had heeded the call of Jesus to come out of the world. Of His brothers, the sons of Joseph (see on Matt. 12:46), Jesus said, "The world cannot hate you" (John 7:7). See on ch. 15:18.

Hateth you. The reason for the hatred is indicated in the preceding verses: Abiding in Christ (v. 4), bringing forth the fruits of righteousness (v. 5), and demonstrating them (v. 16). The deeds of the world are reproved by the righteous life and the open testimony of the Christian (John 7:7; 1 John 3:13). Robertson asks the significant question: "Does the world hate us? If not, why not? Has the world become more Christian or Christians more worldly?"

20. *Remember the word.* See John 13:16; cf. Matt. 10:24; Luke 6:40.

Persecute you. Of this, Jesus had warned earlier (see Matt. 10:17–23). He did not want the disciples to become discouraged when the full force of persecution should break loose upon them. How effectively this lesson was learned was later to be seen in the undaunted courage with which the disciples faced imprisonment, beating, torture, and death (Acts 5:41; 16:22–25; etc.). In the face of unparalleled persecution (2 Cor. 4:8–12; 1 Cor. 11:23–28) Paul could say, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). Fearful that afflictions would overwhelm the infant church at Thessalonica, Paul wrote to the believers, "That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto" (1 Thess. 3:3; cf. Phil. 1:29; 2 Tim. 3:12; 8T 127–129).

Kept my saying. Despite rejection by the majority, some believed the word of Christ. Thus it would be with the disciples. Some would receive their word and be saved. Their work would be rewarded.

21. *For my name's sake.* That is, for my sake, or, on my account. "Name" often stands for person or character (see Matt. 10:22; 12:21).

Know not him. They professed to know and worship God, but they were ignorant of His character and misconstrued His word. Compare chs. 14:7; 16:3; 17:3.

22. Not had sin. See on ch. 9:41. “The times of this ignorance God winked at” (Acts 17:30). Now that Jesus had come and revealed to them the way of salvation, they were without excuse. What greater revelation of Himself could God have given? Their sin lay in not accepting Jesus, “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). “To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:17). In the judgment men will be condemned not because they have been in error but because they “have neglected heaven-sent opportunities for learning what is truth” (DA 490).

Cloke. Gr. *prophasis*, “a pretext.”

23. Hateth my Father also. Compare chs. 13:20; 14:7, 9–11.

24. The works. In v. 22 the appeal was to the words that Jesus had spoken. Here the appeal is to the works. Either was sufficient evidence on which to base faith in Him as the Saviour of the world.

Had not had sin. See on v. 22.

25. That the word. The Greek of this clause may be interpreted as expressing result rather than purpose (see on John 9:3; cf. on Matt. 1:22).

In their law. See on ch. 10:34.

They hated me. The quotation is probably from Ps. 69:4. However, compare Ps. 35:19.

26. Comforter. See on ch. 14:16.

I will send. Again in ch. 16:7 Jesus is presented as the one who sends the Spirit, whereas in ch. 14:26; cf. v. 16, the Father sends the Spirit. There is no contradiction here. The Father and Son work in unison (see on ch. 10:30).

27. Ye also. See Acts 5:32.

From the beginning. They were thus qualified to be witnesses (see Acts 1:21, 22). Compare the use of the phrase “from the beginning” in 1 John 2:7, 24; 3:11; 2 John 1:5, 6.

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1 DA 674, 675, 676; 5T 230

1, 2 Ev 361; 1T 300; 4T 353; 6T 133; 8T 186
1–87T 171

1–27DA 674–678; TM 271

2 DA 676; SL 82; 3T 387; 4T 354; 5T 18, 344

3 1T 339

4 4T 355; 5T 232

4, 5 AA 284; CSW 30; CT 329; SC 68; SL 80; TM 151, 324; 1T 289, 340; 5T 47, 228, 254
4–6DA 676; 1T 300; 2T 263, 441, 454; 4T 542; 5T 49
4–16MH 514

5 CG 232; COL 52, 332; CSW 94, 158, 165, 168; CT 231, 412; DA 675; Ev 343, 643; EW 73; FE 110, 178, 196, 200, 225, 249, 284, 292, 349, 476; GC 73; GW 392; MH 513; ML 11, 15, 74; MM 41, 99, 150; SL 55; TM 142, 154, 339, 381; 3T 387, 522; 4T 320, 354, 560; 5T 229, 230, 306, 344, 425, 583, 586, 591; 6T 45, 247, 438; 7T 39, 152, 194, 298; 9T 152, 203

6 DA 739; ML 93; 5T 229

7 CG 499; COL 144; LS 80, 207; ML 20; 3T 209; 4T 259, 355

7, 8 DA 677; EW 29, 73

8 COL 301; CS 302; CSW 181; DA 251; GW 287; MYP 314; SL 84; 3T 528; 5T 239, 348;
6T 42; 8T 243, 246
9, 10 FE 399
10 COL 283, 312; DA 287; Ed 78; FE 135, 402; GC 469; MH 426, 451; ML 311; SC 61;
SL 67, 80; TM 138; 7T 141; 8T 289, 312
11 MH 504; SC 124; 7T 273
12 CH 32; DA 641, 677; FE 210; ML 187; TM 158, 192; IT 150, 166, 371; 5T 35, 360,
604; 6T 455; WM 83
12, 13 2T 169
12–141T 690
13 3T 529
14 MM 43; 4T 188; 5T 553
15 Ed 94; FE 303; GW 267; 2T 510
16 CT 509; SC 100; TM 212, 217; 2T 426, 431; 7T 259
16–191T 285
17 COL 382; DA 504
17–202T 492
18 PP 559; 1T 418
18–21DA 678; 5T 433
19 2T 690
19, 20GC 144
20 GC 47
20, 21 AA 79
22 GC 164
25 MB 32
26 AA 51
26, 27 AA 22; TM 69, 285

CHAPTER 16

1 *Christ comforteth his disciples against tribulation by the promise of the Holy Ghost, and by his resurrection and ascension: 23 assureth their prayers made in his name to be acceptable to his Father. 33 Peace in Christ, and in the world affliction.*

1. Offended. Gr. *skandalizō* (see on Matt. 5:29). On forewarnings concerning persecution, so as to prevent discouragement, see on John 15:20.

2. The synagogues. See on ch. 9:22.

Doeth God service. The Jews who persecuted the apostles reasoned that these evangelists were blasphemers who sought to overthrow the religion that God had established (see Acts 6:13, 14; Acts 21:28–31). A reflection of the Jews' zeal for their religion and the jealousy with which they sought to protect its worship is found in one of the precepts of the Mishnah: "If one steals the *Kiswah*, or curses by enchantment, or cohabits with a heathen [lit., Syrian] woman, he is punished by zealots. If a priest performs the Temple service whilst unclean, his brother priests do not charge him therein at Beth Din, but the young priests take him out of the Temple Court and split his skull with clubs. [Of] a layman who performed the service in the Temple, R. Akiba said: He is strangled; the Sages say: [His death is] at the hands of Heaven" (*Sanhedrin* 9. 6, Soncino

ed. of the Talmud, p. 542). The pages of history record repeated persecutions carried out in the name of religion.

3. *Have not known.* Compare ch. 15:21.

4. *The time.* Literally, “the hour.” Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the reading “their hour,” that is, the hour of these persecutors. See Luke 22:53.

Ye may remember. The forewarning would strengthen them in the hour of persecution (see on ch. 15:20).

I was with you. There was no need to tell them earlier, for if persecution had come, Jesus would have been with them to encourage them. In fact, while Jesus was on earth the persecution was directed against Him. But after His departure the hatred of the enemy would be directed against His representatives.

5. *I go my way.* [*The Coming of the Comforter*, John 16:5–33.] Compare chs. 7:33; 13:33; 14:2.

Asketh. Literally, “keeps on asking.” Understood in this way this verse does not contradict chs. 13:36 and 14:5. The disciples had earlier made inquiry concerning this matter, but had ceased to do so. They were absorbed in selfish thoughts and did not think of the joy of their Master at the prospect of returning to His Father and carrying the plan of salvation one step nearer completion. It was expedient that He go away (ch. 16:7).

6. *Sorrow.* See on ch. 14:1. They should, instead, have rejoiced at the prospect of the glory to which their Master was returning. Instead the thought of their own separation from Him filled their hearts with anxious forebodings.

7. *Expedient for you.* Or, “profitable for you.” The death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ were important events in the outworking of the plan of salvation. Without these the era of the Spirit would not have become a reality. His departure was thus to the disciples’ profit and advantage. In His incarnate body Jesus could not be everywhere present, but through the medium of the Spirit Jesus could be with each one of His followers at all times and in all places (see Matt. 28:20).

Comforter. See on ch. 14:16.

I will send him. According to the plan of God, Jesus was to complete His work on earth and ascend to the Father’s throne before the Spirit should come.

8. *Reprove.* Gr. *elegchō*, “to convict.” The word is so translated in ch. 8:9. In ch. 8:46 it is translated “convince” (cf. 1 Cor. 14:24; Titus 1:9; James 2:9), but “convict” would be preferable. In Luke 3:19; Eph. 5:11, 13; 2 Tim. 4:2 *elegchō* is translated “reprove,” and in 1 Tim. 5:20; Titus 1:13; Heb. 12:5; Rev. 3:19 “rebuke.”

Of sin. This Jesus had also done (ch. 7:7). The day of Pentecost, the day when the gift of the Spirit was bestowed, provided a striking exhibit of this aspect of the Spirit’s work. Those who heard Peter’s address were “pricked in their heart” (Acts 2:37). One of the first evidences of the operation of the Holy Spirit is the deep conviction that one is a sinner.

Of righteousness. Not only does the Spirit expose sin; He convicts of positive righteousness. He urges men to accept the righteousness of Christ, both the imputed (Rom. 10:3–10) and the imparted (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 2:13).

Of judgment. Jesus also warned men of the judgment to come (Matt. 5:21, 22; 10:15; 11:22, 24; 12:36). None can escape the judgment; it is as sure as death (Heb. 9:27). Though fear of judgment is not to be the prime motive of doing right, it is, nevertheless, a

powerful agency in awakening sin-darkened minds and is frequently, and rightly, appealed to (see Mark 9:43–48; Rev. 14:9–11). See on John 16:11.

Thus the Spirit convicts men of their sin, points them to the salvation and righteousness that is in Jesus, and warns them of the consequences of continuing in their sins and of neglecting the salvation freely proffered.

9. Believe not on me. God has provided only one means of salvation (Acts 4:12; 1 Cor. 3:11), namely, faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:16, 18, 36). Those who are enlightened, as the Jews had been, are without excuse when they refuse to believe in Him whom God sent into the world (see on ch. 15:22).

10. Go to my Father. While on earth Jesus had pointed the way to the perfect righteousness required of those who enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:48; 6:33). After His departure this would be the special work of the Spirit (see on John 16:8).

11. Of judgment. Gr. *krisis*, the act of judging. The vindication of the divine character at the cross assured that Satan would be brought to trial and condemned. And if this were true of the archrebel himself, it would also be true of all his accomplices. See on v. 8.

Prince of this world. See on ch. 12:31; cf. ch. 14:30.

12. Many things to say. The human mind is capable of acquiring truth at a limited rate. Jesus had spent more than three years with the disciples, during which time He had faithfully instructed them in divine things. They had learned much, but there were many things yet to be revealed (see on ch. 14:26). The wisdom of God is infinite and cannot be exhausted. A lifetime of diligent study enables one to gain but a limited concept of the infinite treasures of spiritual knowledge.

Sometimes a spiritual lethargy prevents the acquisition of further divine truth. This was the case with the Corinthians, whom Paul designated as “carnal,” who needed to be fed with “milk” rather than with solid food, because they were unable to endure a substantial spiritual diet (1 Cor. 3:1, 2). Christians are urged to leave the first “principles of the doctrine of Christ” and to “go on unto perfection” (Heb. 6:1; cf. Heb. 5:11–14).

13. Spirit of truth. See on ch. 14:17.

Into all truth. See on chs. 14:26; 16:12. “Truth” is here used primarily in its theological sense (see on ch. 8:32). However, it is also true that all right scientific discoveries and inventions have their source in God (see CT 277).

Not speak of himself. Jesus declared the same concerning Himself (chs. 12:49; 14:10). The ultimate source of authority was God.

Things to come. Jesus had revealed things to come (Matt. 24; etc.). But more light concerning the future was to be given. The prophecies of Revelation are an outstanding example of how this was fulfilled. Concerning the messages to the churches John declared, “Let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Rev. 2:7, 11; etc.).

14. Glorify me. That is, by a revelation of the majesty and glory of the risen Christ and an unveiling of the mysteries of the plan of salvation.

Of mine. It is possible to impart a portion of the full fund of truth (see on v. 12).

15. All things. See ch. 3:35; cf. ch. 17:10.

16. Shall not see me. The first “little while” is generally understood to refer to the short time intervening until the Passion, and the second “little while” to the three days between the crucifixion and the resurrection. Some have suggested a dual meaning in Christ’s words, first, that they refer to the death and resurrection, and second that they refer to the ascension to the Father and His return at the end of the age (ch. 14:1–3). This

return is elsewhere represented as not far away: “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly” (Rev. 22:20; cf. ch. 1:3). However, in view of the explanation in John 16:20–29 it seems best to consider the passage a reference to the events of the immediate future.

17. Among themselves. They were apparently reluctant to ask Jesus directly. His enigmatic statement had effectively aroused their curiosity.

What is this? Jesus had earlier spoken of His death and resurrection, but the disciples had not fully grasped the significance of His words (see on Matt. 16:21); hence their perplexity at His statement.

20. Weep and lament. Jesus does not give a direct reply to the inquiry of the disciples, but sheds further light on the circumstances surrounding the events to take place in “a little while.” For a fulfillment of the prediction see Luke 23:27; John 20:11.

World shall rejoice. The enemies of Jesus rejoiced when He was silenced. However, their exulting was short-lived, as was the sorrow of the friends of Jesus.

Turned into joy. See ch. 20:20.

21. A woman. Literally, “the woman,” a typical woman. The figure of a travailing woman is found in the advertising OT (Isa. 26:17; 66:7; etc.). But only here is mention made of her sorrow turning into joy.

Man. Gr. *anthrōpos*, man in a generic sense, that is, a human being.

22. Heart shall rejoice. This is the application Jesus makes of the figure introduced in v. 21. It is therefore stretching the figure too far to see in the travail of the woman the birth pains of a new order of the kingdom. The disciples’ rejoicing came on the day of the resurrection.

No man. Gr. *oudeis*, “no one,” the devil and his agents included. The disciples’ joy would be complete and permanent in spiritual fellowship with the risen Lord, who would be with them “always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:20).

23. In that day. That is, the era of the gift of the Holy Spirit (chs. 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7–14).

Ask me nothing. The word “ask” is used twice in this verse, in the first instance from *erōtaō*, in the second from *aiteō*. *Erōtaō* generally means to ask a question, in contrast to *aiteō*, which means to ask for something. This distinction may have been intended here. In this case Jesus is informing the disciples that in the day of the gift of the Holy Spirit there will be no need for questions, for the Spirit would teach them all things (ch. 14:26). The disciples on this last night had asked many questions and had exhibited marked dullness of understanding (chs. 14:5, 8, 9, 22; 16:17). The Spirit would enlighten their minds and they would understand that which now appeared so enigmatic.

However, John also uses *erōtaō* in the sense of asking for something (see ch. 14:16, where it is translated “pray”). If John intended the same meaning here, then the contrast is between “ask me” and “ask the Father.” The disciples would no longer have Jesus’ bodily presence among them, but they could freely petition the Father in the name of Jesus, fully assured that their requests would be granted.

Verily. See on Matt. 5:18; John 1:51.

In my name. See on ch. 14:13.

24. Hitherto have ye. The relationship of the Son to the Father had previously not been fully understood. Prayers had been directed to the Deity with a limited or, perhaps in some cases, no concept of the Godhead. After Christ's ascension and His inauguration as priest and king His true position as the Mediator of the Christian's prayers would be understood.

Your joy. See on ch. 15:11.

25. Proverbs. Gr. *paroimiai* (see on ch. 10:6).

Shew you plainly. The Spirit would quicken their understanding (chs. 14:26; 16:13).

26. In my name. See on ch. 14:13.

I say not. Christ's intercession was not to overcome any reluctance or unwillingness on the part of the Father to hear the prayers of the saints. The Father Himself loved the disciples (see v. 27) and was as willing to answer prayer as was the Son. The point of illustration in representing Jesus as an intercessor (Heb. 7:25) is that only by means of the infinite sacrifice of the Son is it possible for either the Father or the Son to extend fullness of blessing to the petitioner.

27. Father himself. See on v. 26.

Because ye. God loves not only those who love His Son, He loves the world (John 3:16; cf. Rom. 5:8). Nevertheless when men respond to the love of God a greater manifestation of that love is possible.

28. I came. The great facts of the Christian faith are here summarized: the preexistence of Christ ("I came forth from the Father"), the incarnation and associated events ("am come into the world"), and the ascension ("go to the Father"). See on ch. 1:1, 14.

29. No proverb. See on ch. 10:6.

30. Are we sure. Literally, "we know." The disciples probably jumped to the conclusion that the moment of illumination mentioned in v. 25 had already arrived. Jesus proceeded to show how limited their concept was (vs. 31, 32).

Any man. The disciples here profess faith in Jesus' ability by replying to the unspoken desire of their hearts (vs. 17-19).

31. Now believe. Christ does not deny that they had believed; He simply implies that their faith had been imperfect.

32. Be scattered. See Mark 14:27, 50.

Leave me alone. They all "forsook him, and fled" (Matt. 26:56).

I am not alone. Christ had never-failing communion with His Father.

33. Peace. See on ch. 14:27.

Have tribulation. See on chs. 15:20; 16:2.

Be of good cheer. Gr. *tharseō*, "to be of good courage," "to be full of courage." Compare Matt. 9:2; 14:27; etc.

I have overcome the world. Jesus looked forward with confidence to the cross, fully assured that He would triumph over the powers of darkness (see Col. 2:15). The prince of this world would be defeated (see on chs. 12:31; 14:30; cf. ch. 16:11), and the disciples had nothing to fear.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2, 4 AA 79
 7 AA 38; Ed 94; MH 104; SC 75
 7, 8 TM 392
 8 AA 52; DA 671; Ev 283; FE 197; GW 284; ML 332; TM 65, 401; 3T 428; 6T 319
 8, 9 ML 43
 11 DA 679
 12 AA 271; DA 507; Ev 57, 202, 369; MH 245; TM 476; 6T 55
 12–14 DA 670
 13 AA 38, 51, 53; CSW 35; Ed 134; Ev 167; EW 190; FE 473; GC viii, 469; GW 284; TM 111; 5T 439; 6T 163; 8T 19
 13, 14 DA 671; GW 297; SC 109; 5T 703
 13–15 Ed 94
 14 AA 52; DA 671; ML 49; SC 91; TM 95, 396
 15 EW 24
 19, 20 DA 277
 20 DA 82
 22 DA 788
 23 Ed 95; TM 205
 23, 24 AA 36; DA 833; SC 74; TM 157; 8T 178
 24 DA 667; GC 477; LS 74; SC 111; 1T 55, 120; 4T 315; 6T 364; 7T 32, 251
 25 MH 420; 8T 267
 27 FE 178; SC 64; 5T 742
 26, 27 GC 416; SC 100; 6T 364; 8T 178
 27 FE 178; SC 64; 5T 742
 32 DA 697
 33 AA 23, 84, 86; DA 123, 679; FE 465; GW 39; LS 265; ML 69, 324; SC 123; 2T 122; 3T 115, 423; 5T 82; 6T 307; 8T 127, 212

CHAPTER 17

1 *Christ prayeth to his Father to glorify him, 6 to preserve his apostles, 11 in unity, 17 and truth, 20 to glorify them, and all other believers with him in heaven.*

1. These words spake Jesus. [*Jesus' Intercessory Prayer*, John 17:1–26.] This prayer concludes Jesus' parting counsel begun in the upper room and continued on the way to Gethsemane. This prayer is the longest of the prayers of Jesus on record. Bengel says with regard to ch. 17 that of all chapters in Scripture it is the easiest in regard to words; the most profound in regard to ideas. The prayer naturally divides itself into three parts: (1) prayer for Himself (vs. 1–5); (2) prayer for the disciples (vs. 6–19); (3) prayer for all believers (vs. 20–26).

Lifted up his eyes. See on ch. 11:41.

Father. See on ch. 13:31; cf. ch. 12:16, 23.

Glorify. See on ch. 13:13; cf. ch. 12:16, 23. Jesus would be glorified by being lifted up, in a victorious death which was the necessary prelude to His glorious resurrection.

2. Power. Gr. *exousia*, “authority” (see on Matt. 28:18).

Flesh. That is, human beings (cf. Mark 13:20; Luke 3:6; etc.).

Eternal life. See on John 1:4; 3:16; 8:51; 10:10; cf. Rom. 6:23.

Thou hast given. See on ch. 6:37.

3. Know thee. Experimental, living knowledge leads to life eternal. There is no salvation in knowledge alone, but neither can there be salvation without knowledge (Rom. 10:13–15). Saving knowledge is here defined as that which is centered upon the “true God,” in contrast with false gods, and upon Jesus Christ. It was the knowledge of Jesus Christ that was strikingly absent from the religion of the Jews. Men will be rejected in the last day because they have rejected the essential knowledge (see on Hosea 4:6). For the importance of knowledge in the development of Christian character see on John 17:17; cf. 5T 743.

4. Glorified thee. The second part of the sentence amplifies the first. God was glorified in the completion of the work that Jesus came to do for the salvation of man.

5. Glorify thou me. Compare v. 1. Jesus prays that He might return to His former glory. On the pre-existence of Christ see on ch. 1:1, 14; cf. ch. 8:58). Paul describes the fulfillment of this prayer: “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Phil. 2:9).

Thy name. “Name” here, as often, stands for character. For Jesus as the personal revelation of the character of His Father see on ch. 1:14, 18.

Thou gavest. See on ch. 6:37. The unity of Father and Son is stressed (see on ch. 10:30).

Kept thy word. Equivalent to “kept thy commandments.” This does not imply perfect obedience, but notes that in contrast with the majority of the Jews the disciples had cast their lot with Jesus and had sought to fulfill the requirements of discipleship.

7. They have known. That is, according to the Greek, “they have come to know and are now aware.” Christ’s relationship with the Father, the God whom the Jews worshiped, was a point of constant emphasis in the teachings of Jesus (chs. 8; 10; etc.). The Jews charged Him with blasphemy and branded Him an impostor for claiming that God was His Father, but the disciples were persuaded of His true origin and identity.

8. Thou gavest me. A further emphasis on the dependence of Christ on the Father during the incarnation (chs. 1:14; 5:19, 30).

Received them. See on v. 7.

9. I pray for them. The disciples have already been introduced (vs. 6–8); now the prayer for them begins.

Not for the world. That is, at the present time. For the moment Jesus is concentrating upon His disciples. Jesus is not representing the world as outside the pale of His or His Father’s solicitude. God loves the world and freely offers salvation to all (John 3:16; Rev. 22:17). Later Jesus includes in His prayer “them also which shall believe on me through their word” (John 17:20).

Hast given me. See on ch. 6:37.

10. Mine are thine. The mutual ownership further emphasizes the oneness of the Father and the Son (see on v. 6).

Glorified. The Father was glorified by the obedience of Christ (see on v. 4). Likewise the Son was glorified by the obedience of the disciples, especially by their carrying out their mission to the world.

11. No more. The immediate future is regraded as present. By Jewish reckoning the day of crucifixion had already arrived.

I come to thee. Or, “I am coming to thee,” a futuristic present, referring to Jesus’ return to the Father, not to His approach to God in prayer.

Holy Father. This title occurs only here in the NT. In vs. 1, 5 the form of address is “Father,” and in v. 25 it is “righteous Father.” The term was doubtless chosen in view of the requests to follow. The subject of vs. 17–19 is sanctification. The word for “sanctify” (v. 17) is *hagiazō*, “to make holy,” and the word for “holy” in the title “Holy Father” is *hagios*, correctly rendered “holy.” It is the Holy Father who is petitioned to make the disciples holy. On the holiness of God see Lev. 11:44; cf. 1 Peter 1:16. The title “Holy Father” also appears in a eucharistic prayer in the Didache 10:2.

Keep. Jesus is about to leave; hence He commits the disciples to His Father’s care (see vs. 11, 12). They would be left in an evil world and would need special grace in their battle against sin. This keeping power every Christian may claim. God will not suffer him to be tempted above what he is able to bear (1 Cor. 10:13). He is impregnable to the assaults of Satan so long as he battles in the strength and light of Heaven. However, God keeps only those who choose to be kept. When against divine counsel men willfully place themselves upon the enemy’s ground they cannot expect to be preserved by the power of God.

Whom. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading “which,” that is, the “name.” This reading conveys the thought that God gave His name to the Son. This concept could be understood in the light of chs. 1:18; 14:9. Jesus came to represent the name, or character, of His Father, and functioned during His incarnation under the authority of His Father.

12. I kept them. See on v. 11.

Thou gavest me. See on ch. 6:37.

Son of perdition. That is, Judas Iscariot. The expression describes one destined to perdition, or destruction. The title is applied to the Antichrist in 2 Thess. 2:3. The word for perdition (*apōleia*) occurs frequently and often describes the final destruction of the wicked (see Matt. 7:13; Rom. 9:22; Phil. 3:19; Heb. 10:39; Rev. 17:8, 11; etc.). By his own choice Judas became a man destined to destruction (see on John 3:17–20).

Might be fulfilled. This clause should doubtless be understood as expressing result rather than purpose. The Greek may be understood either way (see on Matt. 1:22; John 9:3). Judas was not destined to betray Jesus (see on John 6:71; 13:18). His heinous act was by his own choice. The passage alluded to is probably Ps. 41:9, the one mentioned in John 13:18.

13. Come I to thee. A reference to Jesus’ return to the Father, as in v. 11 (see comments there).

Joy fulfilled. See on ch. 15:11 cf. ch. 16:24.

14. Given them. Compare vs. 8, 17. The word delivered to them the disciples had kept (v. 6).

Hated them. See on ch. 15:18–21.

Not of the world. They were in the world (vs. 11, 15) but did not partake of the spirit of the world. They were sent into the world (v. 18) that they might induce others to renounce the world (Mark 16:15).

15. Out of the world. This might be thought to be the most effective means of being preserved from the evil of the world. But the disciples had a mission to accomplish in the world, even as Jesus had come into the world to accomplish His work (see v. 4).

The evil. The Greek may be understood as referring either to evil as a principle or to the evil one (see on Matt. 6:13). Either meaning is appropriate to the context. The same word appears in 1 John 5:18, but there a different grammatical case identifies the adjective as masculine, so making it a clear reference to the evil one.

16. Not of the world. See on v. 14.

17. Sanctify. Gr. *hagiazō*, literally, “to treat as holy,” “to consecrate,” “to make holy.” The disciples were to be consecrated to their task. Holiness is one of the attributes of God (1 Peter 1:16). Hence to be made holy is to become like God. This work the plan of salvation was designed to accomplish (2 Peter 1:4; Ed 125).

Through thy truth. For a definition of truth see on ch. 8:32. The Word of God is declared to be “truth”. The Scriptures reveal to us the character of God and of Jesus Christ. We become new creatures by making the truths of the Word of God a part of the life.

18. Sent me. See on ch. 3:17.

Sent them. He had earlier sent them out (Luke 9:1, 2) and would commission them again before departing from this world (John 20:21, 22).

19. Sanctify myself. Here the meaning “consecrate myself,” or, “dedicate myself,” seems to be the more appropriate definition (see on v. 17). Jesus dedicated Himself to the completion of the task He had come into the world to accomplish. Before Him lay the cross, and in the act of offering Himself He made possible the sanctification of all believers (see Heb. 10:10).

20. Them also. Here begins the prayer for all believers (see on v. 1) to the end of time.

Through their word. That is, through their preaching, teaching, and writing.

21. May be one. There would be diversities of gifts (1 Cor. 12), but there was to be unity of spirit, objectives, and beliefs. There were to be no strivings for supremacy such as had recently plagued the Twelve (Luke 22:24–30). The unity springing from the blended lives of Christians would impress the world of the divine origin of divine origin of the Christian church.

22. Glory. Here probably the glory of the incarnate Christ. This was to shine forth in the believer. Bengel remarks, “How great is the majesty of Christians!” Compare Rom. 8:30.

23. I in them. The close unity between the believer and the members of the Godhead is further emphasized.

Made perfect. See on Matt. 5:48. Growth toward perfection can take place only when the believer abides in Christ (see John 15:1–5).

World may know. See on v. 21.

24. Be with me. That is, in heaven. Jesus prays for the culmination of the plan of redemption in the glorification of the church of God at the time of the second coming of Christ. The human family has long been in a foreign land (Heb. 11:13, 14), away from the Father’s house (Rev. 14:2, 3). “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth ... waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of” the body (Rom. 8:22, 23). The redemption comes when the Lord descends from heaven at the end of the age and gathers His children from the four corners of the earth (Matt. 24:31; 1 Thess. 4:16). At that time the faithful go to “ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:17). For the arrival of this glad moment

of reunion Jesus prayed. For the speedy fulfillment of the promise every Christian should pray (Rev. 22:20).

Before the foundation. The same phrase occurs in Eph. 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20. See on John 1:1, 14.

25. Righteous Father. Compare the address “Holy Father” (v. 11). The world had not acknowledged the Father in spite of Jesus’ revelation of Him.

26. Have declared. See on ch. 1:18.

Name. That is, character.

Will declare it. Through the subsequent revelations of the Spirit (see on chs. 14:26; 16:13).

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- 1 PK 69
- 1–3DA 680; FE 392, 431
- 3 AA 262, 531; COL 114, 133; CSW 110; CT 45, 169, 406; Ed 126; Ev 181; FE 174, 223, 272, 285, 341, 376, 381, 403, 404, 413, 415, 446, 484; MH 410; MYP 189, 191; TM 170; 5T 737; 6T 97, 131, 362; 8T 60, 62
- 4 AA 24; DA 829; MB 14; PK 69
- 4–6MH 454
- 4–8CT 459
- 5 AA 39
- 6 Ed 87; TM 193; 5T 738; 8T 286
- 8 FE 272
- 10, 11 AA 24; DA 680
- 11 AA 90
- 11–15FE 431
- 12 GC 646
- 14 AA 90; MH 404; 2T 44
- 14, 15 1T 285
- 14–16AA 467; FE 182; PK 59; 2T 492
- 15 FE 153, 395; MYP 82, 423; SC 99, 123; TM 198; 5T 334
- 15–17CT 323
- 15–18CH 591; MM 218
- 17 AH 186; COL 100; CS 28, 74, 83; CSW 19, 68; CW 124; Ev 155, 290; FE 120, 432, 433; GC 469, 608; ML 252, 261; MYP 35, 460; SL 60, 67; Te 19; TM 111, 150, 160, 378; 1T 248, 285, 336, 339, 406, 474, 543, 589, 621, 704; 2T 60, 78, 184, 188, 317, 479, 505, 639, 694; 3T 65, 162; 4T 315, 371, 441, 545; 5T 206, 432; 6T 403, 417; 7T 31, 249; 8T 184, 193, 235; 9T 40, 69
- 17–19FE 448
- 17–215T 237; 9T 196
- 18 COL 191; MB 40; MH 395; MM 24; MYP 47; SC 115
- 18, 19 FE 432; ML 252
- 19 COL 142; CSW 124; CT 197, 323; FE 161, 262, 466; GW 104; MB 36; MM 203; TM 162; 1T 339; 4T 457; 5T 442
- 19–23TM 124; 8T 80
- 20 ML 252; SC 75; 4T 401, 530
- 20, 21 MH 421; PP 520; 1T 327, 417; 3T 434; 4T 17

20–23AA 24; DA 680; ML 252; 3T 361; 8T 269; 9T 198

20–268T 239

21 AA 20, 90; CS 47, 303; Ev 213; FE 240; ML 11; TM 25, 55, 386; 1T 324; 5T 61, 94, 279, 488, 620; 6T 401; 7T 156; 8T 175; 9T 179, 194; WM 297

21–23Ed 86; 3T 446; 6T 151

22, 23 MH 405

23 AA 20, 24, 90; FE 178, 234; MB 104; SC 115; TM 215

23, 24 TM 18

24 DA 834; GC 501, 636, 646; TM 20; 4T 529; 6T 309

25 5T 737

25, 26 FE 177; PK 69

26 DA 19; FE 178, 466; 8T 286

CHAPTER 18

1 *Judas betrayeth Jesus.* 6 *The officers fall to the ground.* 10 *Peter smiteth off Malchus' ear.* 12 *Jesus is taken, and led unto Annas and Caiaphas.* 15 *Peter's denial.* 19 *Jesus examined before Caiaphas.* 28 *His arraignment before Pilate.* 36 *His kingdom.* 40 *The Jews ask Barabbas to be let loose.*

1. He went forth. [*Gethsemane, John 18:1–12=Matt. 26:36–56=Mark 14:32–52=Luke 22:40–53.* Major comment: Matthew.] Jesus and His disciples had left the upper room before this (see on ch. 14:31), and were now making their way to the Garden of Gethsemane. For the location of the garden see on Matt. 26:30.

Cedron. Or, Kidron, as it is known in the OT (2 Sam. 15:23; 1 Kings 2:37; etc.). It is the valley running north and south, immediately to the east of Jerusalem (see Palestine During the Ministry of Jesus).

Garden. Elsewhere identified as Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36; Mark 14:32). John does not mention the prayer in the garden, which all the other gospel writers describe.

2. Judas. For a character sketch of Judas see on Mark 3:19.

3. Band. Gr. *speira*, “a cohort, the tenth part of a legion.” The soldiers were probably supplied from the Roman fortress of Antonia. For the presence of Roman soldiers in the company see on Matt. 26:47.

Chief priests and Pharisees. The two groups were united in their opposition to Jesus (see on ch. 11:47).

Lanterns and torches. Only John mentions these. It was now late at night (see on Matt. 26:57).

4. Went forth. His hour had now come. He went forth fearlessly to meet the betrayer.

Whom seek ye? Jesus is in complete command of the situation. He takes the offensive and questions the betrayers.

5. Jesus of Nazareth. See on Matt. 2:23. The title is frequently applied to Jesus (Matt. 26:71; Mark 10:47; 16:6; Luke 4:34; 18:37; 24:19; John 19:19).

I am he. The “he” is supplied. The “I am” stands without the pronoun in the Greek and may have been designedly used with its deeper implications, as in ch. 8:58 (see comment there).

6. Fell to the ground. This incident is not mentioned by the Synoptists. The falling backward of the mob suggests some manifestation of divinity. The miracle gave further evidence to the murderous mob of the divinity of the One whom they were seeking to

arrest. The repulse was momentary, for a few moments later they carried out their designs (v. 12).

7. Asked he. Jesus is still in command. This is apparently the moment when Judas stepped forward and delivered his traitorous kiss (see on Matt. 26:49), which, however, John does not mention.

8. Let these go. The request shows Jesus' solicitude for the disciples. Shortly after this "they all forsook him, and fled" (Mark 14:50).

9. Which he spake. The reference is to the fulfillment of Jesus' own saying, doubtless the implied prediction in ch. 17:12.

10. Having a sword. See on Matt. 26:51.

11. Shall I not drink it? The question is emphatically expressed in the Greek. The reference is doubtless to the cup which Jesus a short time previously had declared Himself willing to drink (Matt. 26:42).

12. Band. Gr. *speira* (see on v. 3).

Captain. Gr. *chiliarchos*, literally, "a captain of a thousand," also a technical term for the commanding officer of a cohort (see on v. 3).

Bound him. Probably by tying His hands behind His back. The voluntary quality of Jesus' submission is evident throughout the narrative. Jesus did not die because He was unable to prevent it; He did not suffer because He had no way of escape. All the soldiers of the Roman garrison could not have hurt a hair of His head without divine permission.

13. Annas. [*Hearing Before Annas, John 18:13–24.* See Betrayal, Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus; Passion Week.] See on Luke 3:2; cf. on Matt. 26:57.

Caiaphas. See on Luke 3:2; Matt. 26:57.

That same year. See on ch. 11:49.

14. Gave counsel. See on ch. 11:49–52.

15. Simon Peter. See on Matt. 26:58.

Another disciple. That is, John the son of Zebedee, the author of the Gospel. As in ch. 13:23, he does not identify himself by name.

Known. Gr. *gnōstos*. The degree of familiarity or association cannot be established by this word.

Palace. Gr. *aulē* (see on Matt. 26:58).

16. Peter stood. See on Matt. 26:69.

17. I am not. See on Matt. 26:70.

18. Made a fire. Jerusalem was at an elevation of about 2,600 ft. (c. 800 m.), and spring mornings were often cool. Compare Mark 14:54; Luke 22:55.

19. Of his disciples. Doubtless concerning the conditions Jesus laid down for discipleship, and indirectly concerning Jesus' assumed position. They were seeking to fasten upon Him the charge of sedition.

Doctrine. That is, "teaching" (see on ch. 7:16).

20. Openly. Or, "publicly." Jesus replies only to the second part of the question (v. 19).

Synagogue. See Matt. 4:23; John 6:59; etc. See pp. 56, 57.

Temple. See chs. 7:14, 28; 8:20; 10:23; etc.

I said nothing. Jesus had taught privately, to be sure, a notable example being His conversation with Nicodemus (ch. 3). Here He denies the implied charge of secretly

planning sedition. His reply was a rebuke to the sinister means by which the Jews had sought to ensnare Him.

21. *Why askest thou me?* There seems to be an appeal here to Jewish judicial law. According to the interpretation of Maimonides, a Jewish scholar of the 12th century A.D., the law did not inflict the penalty of death upon a sinner by his own confession. Some have questioned whether this principle was operative in the time of Jesus. The principle seems to be implied in the Mishnah (see, for example, *Sanhedrin* 6. 1, 2, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, pp. 275, 281, 283, 284), and there is reason to believe that it was valid earlier (see DA 715). Viewing the matter legally, we might here think of Jesus as appealing for His rights, and as asking the court to secure the proper witnesses.

22. *Struck Jesus.* Probably by a slap on the cheek, as the Greek may be understood.

High priest. Compare Ex. 22:28; Acts 23:2–5.

23. *Bear witness.* A dignified, searching reply, an illustration of how Jesus, on occasion at least, interpreted the injunction of Matt. 5:39.

24. *Bound.* The Greek suggests that the original bonds (v. 12) had been removed for the preliminary hearing before Annas (see on Matt. 26:57), and that the bonds were again placed upon Him when He was taken to Caiaphas.

Unto Caiaphas. See Additional Notes on Matthew 26, Note 2.

25. *Simon Peter stood.* [*Night Trial Before the Sanhedrin, John 18:25–27=Matt. 26:57–75=Mark 14:53–72=Luke 22:54–65. Major comment: Matthew.*] According to Matt. 26:69 Peter also sat with the group around the fire.

They said. The spokesman is identified in Matt. 26:71 as a woman.

26. *Being his kinsman.* The third questioner is thus identified only by John. For Peter's denial of Jesus see on Matt. 26:69–75.

28. *Hall of judgment.* [*First Trial Before Pilate, John 18:28–38=Matt. 27:2, 11–14=Mark 15:2–5=Luke 23:1–5. Major comment: Luke and John. See Betrayal, Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus; Passion Week, the Resurrection to Ascension, Palestine Under the Herodians.*] Gr. *praitōrion* (see on Matt. 27:27).

Early. Gr. *prōi*, a general term for early in the morning. In Mark 13:35 *prōi* is used technically of the fourth watch of the night, which extended from about 3:00 to 6:00 o'clock in the morning. The trial probably began about 6:00 o'clock (see Additional Notes on Matthew 26, Note 2).

Be defiled. John presents the eating of the Passover as an event still future. For a discussion of the time of the Passover in the year of Jesus' death see Additional Notes on Matthew 26, Note 1.

29. *Went out.* Inasmuch as the members of the Sanhedrin would not come in (v. 28).

What accusation? Pilate asks for the formal charge, in harmony with proper legal procedure.

30. *Malefactor.* Gr. *kakopoios* literally, "a doer of evil." The word occurs elsewhere only in 1 Peter 2:12, 14; 3:16; 4:15, and in each case is translated "evildoer." In Luke 23:32, 33, 39 "malefactor" is from *kakourgos*, "one who commits grave offenses."

Delivered him. They had no formal charge they could back up with witnesses. They hoped that Pilate would accept the verdict of the Sanhedrin and sentence Jesus without a formal inquiry into the charge.

31. Take ye him. Pilate takes the Jews at their word. They had implied that their judgment ought to be sufficient.

To death. The right to execute capital punishment is generally believed to have been taken away from Jewish courts about the time Judea became a province, in A.D. 6, or soon thereafter. According to Josephus, “The territory of Archelaus was now reduced to a province, and Coponius, a Roman of the equestrian order, was sent out as procurator, entrusted by Augustus with full powers, including the infliction of capital punishment” (*War* ii. 8. 1 [117]; Loeb ed., vol. 2, p. 367). In other matters the courts had full jurisdiction. In matters relating to capital punishment they could pass sentence, but ratification by the Roman procurator was required. That this provision was not always followed seems evident by such instances as the killing of Stephen (Acts 7), and of James, John’s brother (Acts 12:2), at least as reported by Josephus (*Antiquities* xx. 9. 1).

A reminder of the loss of the full judicial power of the Jewish courts is found in the Jerusalem Talmud, which states: “Forty years before the destruction of the Temple criminal jurisdiction was taken away from the Israelites” (*Sanhedrin* 1. 18a, 37; cited in Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 1, p. 1027). The time element in this statement is known to be erroneous, but otherwise the statement doubtless has a historical basis.

32. Signifying what death. Jesus had predicted death by crucifixion (see on ch. 12:32). If Jesus had died by the hands of the Jews, He would doubtless have died by stoning. At least on two occasions the Jews attempted to stone Him for blasphemy (chs. 8:59; 10:31–33). The Mishnah cites stoning as the penalty for blasphemy (*Sanhedrin* 7. 4, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 359). For ancient methods of stoning see on ch. 8:7.

33. Art thou the King? This is the second time Pilate has asked this question. The first instance is mentioned in Matt. 27:11 (see comments there; cf. DA 726, 727).

34. Of thyself. That is, are you genuinely interested in learning the truth (cf. DA 726, 727)?

35. Am I a Jew? Pride prevents Pilate from acknowledging any sincere interest in learning about the mission of Jesus.

36. This world. For the spiritual nature of the kingdom Jesus came to establish see on Matt. 3:2, 3; 4:17; 5:2; Mark 3:14.

Fight. Earthly kingdoms are established by force of arms, but Jesus’ kingdom was not earthly. Jesus denied the charge of sedition brought against Him by the Jews.

37. Art thou a king? The construction of this question in the Greek shows that a positive answer is expected.

To this end. The purpose of the incarnation was the establishment of the kingdom of grace preparatory to the kingdom of glory (see on v. 36).

Unto the truth. For a definition of the word “truth” see on ch. 8:32. The archdeceiver, by centuries of darkness and misrepresentation, had obscured the truth about God, man, and salvation.

Heareth my voice. They are like the sheep who hear the voice of the shepherd (ch. 10:3, 16).

38. What is truth? Pilate was impressed with Jesus’ words and would have listened to further instruction, but the mob outside was clamoring for a decision, and Pilate did not pause for an answer, and so passed by a golden opportunity. Like Felix, he was waiting

for a more favorable season (Acts 24:25). If any was later granted him of Heaven, it was neglected as was this one. Pilate died some years later, a suicide (see on Matt. 27:24).

No fault. Pilate was convinced of Jesus' innocence and should have set about immediately to release Him.

39. King of the Jews. [*Second Trial Before Pilate, John 18:39 to 19:16=Matt. 27:15–31a=Mark 15:6–19=Luke 23:13–25.* Major comment: Matthew and John. See Betrayal, Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus; Passion Week, the Resurrection to Ascension, Palestine Under the Herodians.] Compare Mark 15:9. The appearance of Jesus before Herod (see Luke 23:6–12) took place at this point in John's narrative of the trial before Pilate, as a comparison of the accounts in Luke and John makes evident.

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1–12DA 685–697

4 EW 167

4–6DA 694

7, 8 DA 695

11 DA 696

13–27DA 698–715

15 AA 539

17 DA 711

20, 21 DA 699

21–23DA 700

26 DA 712

28–40DA 723–740

29, 30 DA 724

31 DA 725

34–38DA 727

36 DA 509; GC 297; SR 344

37 CT 22, 259; FE 190, 405

38 CSW 78; MH 456; 4T 263; 8T 317

40 AA 43; DA 739; TM 409

CHAPTER 19

5

1 *Christ is scourged, crowned with thorns, and beaten. 4 Pilate is desirous to release him, but being overcome with the outrage of the Jews, he delivered him to be crucified. 23 They cast lots for his garments. 26 He commendeth his mother to John. 28 He dieth. 31 His side is pierced. 38 He is buried by Joseph and Nicodemus.*

1. Scourged him. Chapter 19 continues the narrative begun in ch. 18:39. This was the first flogging. Jesus was flogged again in connection with the sentence of crucifixion (see on Matt. 27:26). The purpose of the first flogging was to elicit, if possible, the compassion of the bloodthirsty mob (see DA 735).

4. I find no fault. Compare John 18:38; 19:6; 1 Peter 2:21, 22. By these words Pilate revealed his weakness. If Jesus was innocent, he should not have permitted Him to be

⁵Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Jn 13:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

scourged. One violation of conscience led to another until Pilate surrendered every particle of justice.

5. Behold the man! Pilate's object in this exclamation was doubtless to excite the pity of the multitude. There stood Jesus before them in His mock kingly robes, crowned with a crown of thorns, bleeding and pale from His recent flogging, yet of kingly mien. Surely, Pilate felt, the demands of the Jewish leaders would be satisfied. But in this he was deceived.

Precisely why Pilate chose to use the term "man" cannot be known. Innocently he uttered a great truth. The One before him, the eternal Word (see on ch. 1:1), had become man (see on ch. 1:14). He was, indeed, the Son of man (see on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10), but also the Son of God (see on Luke 1:35). His incarnation and death won for us eternal salvation.

6. Take ye him. The added words "and crucify him" show that Pilate was not turning the matter over to the Sanhedrin, for crucifixion was a Roman form of capital punishment. Had the Jews inflicted the death penalty it would have been by stoning (see on ch. 18:32). Pilate seems to be speaking in exasperation and in angry sarcasm: "If you demand crucifixion *you* [emphatic in the Greek] must carry out the sentence; I find no guilt in him."

No fault. This is the third time Pilate mentions the fact (see chs. 18:38; 19:4).

7. By our law. See on John 18:32; cf. Lev. 24:16.

Son of God. See on chs. 5:18; 10:33.

8. The more afraid. The letter from his wife informing Pilate of her dream (Matt. 27:19) was the earlier occasion of fear. The implication that Jesus was a supernatural being filled him with foreboding.

9. Judgment hall. See on Matt. 27:2.

Whence art thou? Fear at the suggestion that Jesus was some supernatural being elicited Pilate's further inquiry into Jesus' origin. He was not interested in the country of Christ's origin; with that he was already familiar (Luke 23:6, 7). But a mysterious fear gripped him at the thought that the noble being standing before him might be divine.

No answer. Compare the silence before Caiaphas (Matt. 26:63) and before Herod (Luke 23:9). Pilate had had his opportunity to learn the truth (see on John 18:38). Further enlightenment would have availed nothing. Jesus knew when to speak and when to keep silent.

10. Speakest thou not? Pilate was provoked at what might be termed contempt of court.

Power. Gr. *exousia*, "authority."

11. Given thee. See on Dan. 4:17; Rom. 13:1.

He that delivered. This is not Judas (chs. 6:71; 12:4; 13:2; 18:2), for Judas did not deliver Jesus to the Roman authorities. Caiaphas as high priest and highest official representative of the Jews is the one here indicted (cf. ch. 18:35).

Greater sin. Caiaphas exercised delegated authority, but at the same time he presumed to be a worshiper of the God who delegated authority and the interpreter of divine law to the people. His guilt was therefore greater. He also sinned against the greater light. Jesus had given repeated evidences of divinity, but the Jewish leaders had steeled their hearts against every ray of light.

The fact that Caiaphas had the “greater sin” did not mean that Pilate was without guilt. The Roman governor bore his share of the responsibility. He might have refused to deliver Jesus. The Saviour would have died, but the guilt would not have rested upon Pilate.

12. To release him. The answer of Jesus (v. 11) heightened Pilate’s fears. The hardened governor was deeply impressed by the words and conduct of the mysterious person before him.

Cæsar’s friend. That is, a staunch supporter of Caesar. The Jews had at last struck upon an argument that was to prove successful. Their reply was a threat, for if the emperor should learn that Pilate had attempted to shield a pretender to the title of king, the governor’s position would be in danger. Fear for his safety led Pilate to forget the religious awe with which he had regarded the prisoner.

The reply of the leaders was conspicuously hypocritical. Were the accusers friends of Caesar? Of all peoples none were more bitter than the Jews against the Roman yoke, and yet they had the duplicity to feign zealous honor for Caesar, whom they so heartily despised.

13. Brought Jesus. That is, from the Praetorium into which Pilate had conducted Jesus for a private interview (v. 9). The Jewish leaders would not enter the Praetorium lest they be defiled and prevented from eating the Passover (ch. 18:28).

Judgment seat. Perhaps an improvised chair made ready outside, inasmuch as the Jews would not enter the judgment hall.

Pavement. Gr. *lithostrōton*, meaning a mosaic pavement, probably of marble.

Gabbatha. A word of uncertain derivation. Some derive it from the Aramaic *geba’*, “to be high,” and hence describe it as an elevated place. The location was probably immediately outside the Praetorium. For the location of the latter see on Matt. 27:2.

14. Preparation of the passover. Gr. *paraskeuē tou pascha*. This phrase is doubtless equivalent to the Heb. *‘ereb happesach*, “eve of the Passover,” a common term in rabbinical literature designating the 14th of Nisan (see Mishnah *Pesaḥim* 4. 1, 5, 6; 5. 1; 10. 1, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, pp. 243, 271, 273; 287; 532; cf. *Pesaḥim* 1. 1, 3; 3. 6; 4. 7; 5. 4, 9; 7. 9, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, pp. 1, 46; 232; 275; 317, 318; 430). The expression may be compared with “eve” of the Sabbath, by which the Jews designated the day before the Sabbath, for which the equivalent Greek expression is *paraskeuē* (Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54). *Paraskeuē* is still the name for Friday in modern Greek. In the crucifixion year the *paraskeuē* for the Passover coincided with the *paraskeuē*, or “preparation” for the Sabbath (John 19:31, 42).

Thus, John seems to designate the crucifixion day as the 14th of Nisan. Those who hold that the crucifixion took place on the 15th of Nisan explain “preparation of the passover” to mean the Friday of the Passover week. Such a usage cannot be demonstrated elsewhere. For the day before the Sabbath, John elsewhere uses *paraskeuē* (vs. 31, 42). For a discussion of the problem of the day of the crucifixion see Additional Notes on Matthew 26, Note 1.

The Talmudic reference to the death of Jesus reads thus: “On the eve of the Passover Yeshu [Jesus] was hanged. ... Since nothing was brought forward in his favour he was hanged on the eve of the Passover!” (*Sanhedrin* 43a, Soncino ed., p. 281).

Sixth hour. Probably Roman time, that is, about 6:00 o’clock in the morning. John’s Gospel was written near the close of the century, and chiefly for Gentile believers (see on ch. 1:38). Here he gives the time in terms familiar to them (see on Matt. 27:45). Elsewhere, he seems to reckon the hours of the day from sunrise rather than from midnight (see chs. 4:6, 52; 11:9).

Behold your King! Doubtless an ironical thrust at the Jews.

15. No king but Caesar. These words were not carefully weighed, for the Jews were not ready to throw away their Messianic hope or formally to repudiate God as their king (see Judges 8:23; 1 Sam. 8:7; 12:12). Their subterfuge reflects their anxiety to get rid of Jesus. Nevertheless, by this declaration they withdrew from the covenant relationship with God and ceased longer to be His chosen people (see DA 737, 738).

16. Delivered he him. John does not mention the incident of the washing of hands (Matt. 27:24). The handing over was not to the Jews but to the Roman authorities responsible for carrying out the sentence of crucifixion.

17. Bearing his cross. [*The Crucifixion, John 19:17–37=Matt. 27:31b–56=Mark 15:20–41=Luke 23:26–49.* Major comment: Matthew and John. See Betrayal, Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus; Crucifixion In Relation To Passover, Passion Week, Resurrection to Ascension.] For incidents on the way to Calvary see Luke 23:26–32.

18. Crucified him. See on Matt. 27:33–35.

21. Write not. Only John records this protest. For the implications see on Matt. 27:37.

22. I have written. Pilate was greatly vexed with the Jews and resolved not to gratify them further. Through their pressure, against his wife’s warning and against his own better judgment, he had condemned an innocent man. He showed that he could be firm if he chose.

23. Made four parts. The clothing became the property of the executioners. Only John mentions the number of the soldiers. The following division has been suggested, the headgear, the sandals, the girdle, and the tallith, the outer garment with fringes (Robertson). What was done with the clothing of the crucified robbers is not disclosed.

Coat. Gr. *chitōn*, an inner garment (see on Matt. 5:40).

Without seam. The garment may have been woven similarly to that of the high priest, which Josephus describes as follows, “But this tunic is not composed of two pieces, to be stitched at the shoulders and at the sides: it is one long woven cloth, with a slit for the neck” (*Antiquities* iii. 7. 4 [161]; Loeb ed., vol. 4, p. 393).

24. Might be fulfilled. The passage may be rendered, “as a result the Scripture was fulfilled” (see on Matt. 1:22; John 9:3; cf. on John 11:4; 12:38).

They parted. The quotation is from Ps. 22:18.

25. His mother. John does not mention her name in his Gospel. In his bodily pain and mental suffering Jesus did not forget His mother. He saw her standing there, at the foot of the cross. He well knew her distress, and commended her to the care of John.

And his mother’s sister. It is not clear whether, in this verse, John mentions three or four women. It is possible that the phrases “his mother’s sister” and “Mary the wife of Cleophas” are in apposition. Cleophas may possibly be the Cleophas of Luke 24:18 (see comment there). With our present knowledge exact identity is impossible.

Mary Magdalene. For her identity see Additional Note on Luke 7.

26. Whom he loved. See on ch. 13:23.

Woman. For this form of address see on ch. 2:4.

Behold thy son! The relationship between John and Jesus was more intimate than that between Jesus and the other disciples (see pp. 891, 892), and John could therefore carry out the duties of a son more faithfully than they. That Jesus entrusted His mother to a disciple is acknowledged as evidence that Joseph no longer lived, and is thought by some to indicate that Mary had no other sons of her own, at least in a position to care for her. Jesus' older brothers, sons of Joseph by a former marriage (see on Matt. 12:46), did not, at this time, believe in Him, and He may have felt that their attitude toward Mary would have been critical and unsympathetic, as it had been toward Him (see on John 7:3–5).

28. Now accomplished Compare Acts 13:29.

Might be fulfilled. See Ps. 69:20, 21.

29. Vinegar. This was the second drink offered Jesus (see on Matt. 27:34, 48).

30. It is finished. Jesus had completed the work His Father had given Him to do (ch. 4:34). Every step in the plan of redemption, laid before the foundation of the world, had been completed according to schedule (see on Luke 2:49). Satan had been unsuccessful in his attempts to overthrow the plan. Christ's victory assured the salvation of man. See DA 758–764.

31. Preparation. Gr. *paraskeuē* (see on v. 14).

Remain upon the cross. According to Deut. 21:22, 23, bodies were not to remain upon a “tree” overnight, but were to be buried on the same day. The following day, being the Sabbath, would make even more imperative the carrying out of the command.

High day. Doubtless called “high day” because that Sabbath was also the first day of unleavened bread (Lev. 23:6; see Additional Notes on Matthew 26, Note 1). This use of the term “high day” cannot be demonstrated from contemporary Jewish literature. Those who hold that Jesus was crucified on Nisan 15 contend that that Sabbath was a high day because the weekly Sabbath coincided with the day of the waving of the first fruits (Lev. 23:9–14). However, Jesus rose on the day the first fruits were offered, in precise fulfillment of the types (see Additional Notes on Matthew 26, Note 1; cf. DA 785, 786).

Legs might be broken. That is, to hasten death.

33. Dead already. It was most unusual to have death come so soon after crucifixion. Some victims lived for several days. Origen, who lived in the time when crucifixion was still practiced, mentions that the majority of the victims lived through the night and through the next day (Origen, *Commentary on Matthew*, “Series Veteris Interpretationis,” sec. 140, in J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 13, col. 1793; cf. Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* viii. 8).

34. Blood and water. Various explanations have been offered for this phenomenon. As early as 1847 Dr. W. Stroud (*Physical Cause of the Death of Christ*) proposed that the blood and water was evidence that Jesus died of a physical rupture of the heart. This theory lacks verification. That Jesus died of a broken heart as a result of the awful pressure of the weight of the sins of the world is evident (see DA 772), but to attempt a precise physical diagnosis from the meager details of the gospel narrative is precarious. The flow of blood and water was indeed remarkable, inasmuch as blood does not normally flow from a corpse, at least not copiously. John calls especial attention to the flow and solemnly attests it (vs. 34, 35). It has been suggested that he notes the fact in

order to set forth the true humanity of Jesus, thus to combat the Docetic heresy of his day which claimed that Jesus became incarnate in appearance only. The Church Fathers gave a highly allegorical interpretation to the passage.

36. *Not be broken.* See on Ex. 12:46.

37. *Whom they pierced.* See on Zech. 12:10.

38. *Joseph of Arimathaea.* [*The Burial, John 19:38–42=Matt. 27:57–61=Mark 15:42–47=Luke 23:50–56.* Major comment: Matthew and Mark.] All four Gospels describe Joseph's part in the burial of Jesus. John alone observes that he was secretly a disciple.

39. *Nicodemus* See on ch. 3:1.

Myrrh. See on Matt. 2:11.

Aloes. An aromatic resin from the tree *Aquilaria agallocha*. The product is mentioned only here in the NT. In the OT it is mentioned in Num. 24:6; Ps. 45:8; S. of Sol. 4:14.

Pound. Gr. *litra*, about 11 1/2 oz. (see on ch. 12:3). “An hundred pound weight” would therefore be about 72 lb. The large quantity was doubtless purchased at considerable cost.

41. *Garden.* Only John mentions this.

42. *Preparation.* Gr. *paraskeuē* (see on v. 14).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–16DA 732–740

4 DA 749

4, 5 DA 735

6 AA 43; EW 109

6–11DA 736

11, 12, 14, 15 DA 737

15 COL 294; CSW 47; DA 745; PP 477

16–30DA 741–757

18 DA 751

19, 21, 22 DA 745

24 DA 746

25 DA 744; EW 176

26, 27 AA 539; DA 752; EW 177; SL 53

27, 28 SR 224

28 DA 123

30 DA 490, 679, 709, 732, 756, 758, 764, 771, 775, 787, 834; EW 177, 180, 184, 209, 253, 281; GC 348, 503; PP 70; SR 227; 2T 211, 212, 4T 82

33 DA 771

34 EW 209

34–37DA 772

36 PP 277

37 FE 197

38–42AA 104; SR 227

39 DA 773

40–42DA 774

CHAPTER 20

1 *Mary cometh to the sepulchre: 3 so do Peter and John, ignorant of the resurrection. 11 Jesus appeareth to Mary Magdalene, 19 and to his disciples. 24 The incredulity, and confession of Thomas. 30 The scripture is sufficient to salvation.*

1. First day of the week. [*The Resurrection, John 20:1–18=Matt. 28:1–15=Mark 16:1–11=Luke 24:1–12.* Major comment: Matthew and John. See See The Resurrection and Subsequent Events; Crucifixion In Relation To Passover, Passion Week, the Resurrection to Ascension, Palestine Under the Herodians.] For a discussion of the sequence of events of ch. 20 see Additional Note on Matt. 28.

2. Whom Jesus loved. See on ch. 13:23.

3. Came to the sepulchre. The incident related in vs. 3–10 remarkably reflects the different temperaments of Peter and John. John was quiet, reserved, deep feeling (see on Mark 3:17); Peter was impulsive, zealous, and forward (see on Mark 3:16). Each reacted in his characteristic fashion upon the receipt of the news from Mary.

7. Napkin. Gr. *soudarion* (see on ch. 11:44). The fact that these graveclothes were there and neatly laid away proves that this was not a case of grave robbery. Thieves would not have gone to the trouble of removing the wrappings.

8. Believed. That is, that Jesus had risen. He doubtless remembered Jesus' prediction of His resurrection. Peter was probably more skeptical. Luke reports that Peter wondered "in himself at that which was come to pass" (ch. 24:12).

9. Knew not the scripture. They did not understand the OT Scriptures predicting the resurrection. They were like the disciples on the way to Emmaus, whom Jesus upbraided with the words, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken" (Luke 24:25; cf. vs. 26, 27). A significant OT prediction of the resurrection is Ps. 16:10 (cf. Acts 2:24–28).

10. Unto their own home. The mother of Jesus was probably already at John's home, and the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (v. 2) would share the news with her.

11. Mary stood. Mary Magdalene had followed Peter and John to the tomb, but had doubtless proceeded with less haste. She was overcome with grief. Her tearstained eyes and her emotional condition made her fail to recognize even the heavenly visitants, who had tidings that would assuage her grief.

12. In white. Angels are commonly described as thus attired (Matt. 28:3; Luke 24:4; Acts 1:10).

13. Woman. See on ch. 2:4.

I know not where. Apparently she does not recognize that these beings are angels "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). Who she thought might have been in the tomb is not explained. She does not wait for an answer, but turns away.

14. Knew not. Perhaps her eyes were "holden" as were those of the disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:16). Or perhaps her eyes were simply too tear filled for her to see clearly.

It was Jesus. This is the first postresurrection appearance (Mark 16:9).

15. Why weepest thou? The same inquiry as that of the angels (v. 13). These are the first recorded words of the risen Christ.

Thou. The pronoun is emphatic in the Greek. Mary entertains no hope of a resurrection. Her only concern is to recover the body of her Lord. She could bury it in the

tomb in which her own brother had lain, but which had been made empty by Jesus (John 11:1, 38; see Additional Note on Luke 7).

16. Mary. Evidently He addressed her in tones with which she was familiar. A great thrill came to her as she realized that her Lord was risen.

Saith unto him. Textual evidence attests the addition of the phrase (cf. p. 146) “in Hebrew.”

Rabboni. Gr. *Rhabbouni*, a transliteration of the Aramaic *rabbuni*, meaning, literally, “my great one,” but used as a form of address to teachers. The term is essentially equivalent to “rabbi” (see on Matt. 23:7; John 1:38).

Master. Gr. *didaskalos*, “Teacher.” “Rabboni” had probably been Mary’s customary form of address (see ch. 11:28).

17. Touch me not. The Greek may be interpreted as meaning either “stop touching me” (this would imply that Mary was embracing His feet) or “stop the attempt to embrace.” The latter is doubtless the meaning here. The point of objection is not that there is anything wrong or sinful in a physical contact with the risen body. There is rather an urgency of situation. Jesus does not wish to be detained now, to receive the homage of Mary. He desires first to ascend to his Father, there to receive the assurance that His sacrifice has been accepted (see DA 790). After His temporary ascension Jesus permitted, without protest, the act He now asked Mary to postpone (see Matt. 28:9).

My brethren. That is, the disciples.

My Father, and your Father. Not, “our Father,” perhaps designedly to show that there are certain and important differences between Christ’s relationship to the Father and ours. “Father” and “God” here stand clearly revealed as synonyms.

18. Told the disciples. Mary proceeded at once to do what she had been told. However, the disciples were unbelieving (Mark 16:11; Luke 24:11).

19. At evening. [*First Appearance in the Upper Room, John 20:19–23=Mark 16:13=Luke 24:33–49.* Major comment: Luke and John. See See The Resurrection and Subsequent Events; the Resurrection to Ascension.] This meeting is doubtless the same as that described in Luke 24:36–48. The meeting took place after the two disciples returned from Emmaus, which was late at night (see on Luke 24:33).

First day of the week. That is, Roman time, which reckoned the days as beginning at midnight. According to Jewish time, which reckoned the day as beginning at sunset, the meeting took place on the second day of the week.

For fear of the Jews. This phrase may modify either the expression “the doors were shut” or the expression “the disciples were assembled.” The Greek construction and context both favor the former. The place where they were assembled was the upper room where they had celebrated the Passover (see Luke 24:33). It seems unlikely that the disciples would have sought concealment in a place so well known as this. However, to have the doors barred against enemies is perfectly understandable (cf. DA 802). The following translation illustrates such a relationship between the clauses, “the doors where the disciples were assembled were shut for fear of the Jews.”

22. Receive ye the Holy Ghost. This was a preliminary, partial fulfillment of the promise of chs. 14:16–18; 16:7–15. The full outpouring came some 50 days later at Pentecost (Acts 2). “Ghost” should be rendered “Spirit” (see on John 14:26).

23. Whose soever sins. Jesus here speaks to the disciples as representatives of His church on earth, to which, acting in its corporate capacity, He has entrusted the

responsibility of caring for the spiritual interests and needs of its individual members. Jesus had already explained to them at length how to deal with erring members, first personally (see on Matt. 18:1-15, 21-35), and then with the authority of the church (see on vs. 16-20). Now He reiterates the counsel given upon that former occasion.

The church is to work faithfully for the restoration of its erring members, encouraging them to repent and turn from their evil ways. When there is evidence that things have been made right with God and man, the church is to accept the repentance as genuine, to release the erring one from the charges brought against him (to “remit” his “sins”), and to receive him back into full fellowship. Such a remitting of sins is ratified in heaven; in fact, God has already accepted and pardoned the repentant one (see on Luke 15:1-7). The Scriptures explicitly teach, however, that confession of sin and repentance for it are to be made directly to the throne of grace in heaven (see Acts 20:21; 1 John 1:9), and that the release of the soul from sin comes only through the merits of Christ and His personal mediation (1 John 2:1). This prerogative God has never delegated to erring mortals, themselves so often in need of divine mercy and grace, even though they be the appointed leaders of the church. See DA 805, 806; see on Matt. 16:19.

They are retained. When evidence of genuine repentance is lacking, the charges brought against an erring member are to be “retained.” Heaven will recognize the decision of the church, for no man can be right with God when he is willfully at odds with his fellow men. He who despises the counsel of God’s appointed representatives on earth cannot expect to enjoy God’s favor. For an illustration of the operation of this principle in the early church see Acts 5:1-11.

24. *Thomas.* [*Second Appearance in the Upper Room, John 20:24-29=Mark 16:14.* Major comment: John. See See The Resurrection and Subsequent Events; Resurrection to Ascension.] See on John 11:25; cf. on Mark 3:18.

25. *Seen the Lord.* Compare the message of Mary (v. 18).

Except I shall see. God ever provides men with sufficient evidence on which to base faith, and those who are willing to accept it can always find their way to Him. At the same time God does not compel men to believe against their will, for in so doing He would deprive them of the right to make their own choice. Were all men like Thomas, later generations could never come to a saving knowledge of the Saviour. In fact, none but the few hundred who actually saw the risen Lord with their natural eyesight would have believed in Him. But for all who do receive Him by faith and believe on His name (see on ch. 1:12) Heaven reserves a special blessing—“Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (ch. 20:29).

I will not believe. This is most emphatically expressed in the Greek.

26. *After eight days.* That is, “eight days” inclusive, or the following Sunday (see p. 249; see Additional Note on Matthew 28). The new meeting, according to Jewish reckoning, took place one week later, perhaps again in the evening (see on v. 19). See pp. 248-250 for the system of reckoning.

Some have attached special significance to the fact that this second meeting of Jesus with the disciples took place on the first day of the week. They have urged that this was the beginning of the memorial of the resurrection day, the occasion for the sanctification and setting apart of Sunday as a day of worship. Surely, if such had been the purpose of the gathering, we would expect some mention of so important a fact. But there is not the least hint of such a purpose. On the other hand, the narrative does provide a valid reason

for the meeting's taking place at that time—the skeptical disciple, Thomas, happened to be present, and Jesus came to strengthen his faith.

Doors being shut. Probably, as on the earlier occasion, for fear of the Jews (see on v. 19).

Peace be unto you. The greeting is the same as on the previous occasion (v. 19).

27. Reach hither thy finger. The Lord knew what was in the heart of Thomas, and upon arrival directed His attention immediately to the doubting disciple. He offered him the exact proof he demanded, unreasonable though his demand was (see v. 25). There is no evidence that Thomas took advantage of the offer. The fact that the Lord read the doubts of his heart so accurately was to him convincing evidence of the resurrection.

28. My Lord. Gr. *ho kurios mou*. Thomas uses the title with its highest significance (see on ch. 13:13). *Kurios* (Lord), in the LXX, translates the Heb. YHWH, the divine name sometimes transliterated into English as Jehovah (see Vol. I, pp. 171-173). By his confession Thomas associated the Being before him with the Jehovah of the OT. Such a confession later apparently became a standard formula of faith (see 1 Cor. 12:3).

My God. Gr. *ho theos mou*. *Theos* (God), in the LXX, translates the Heb. *'Elohim*, the divine title “God.” In the NT *Theos* is generally used of the Father (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; etc.), but here, as in John 1:1 (see comment there), the word ascribes deity to Christ. Though there were many things about the relationship of the Persons of the Godhead that Thomas did not yet understand clearly, his confession was more profound and more far-reaching in its implications than those made earlier by others of the disciples (see, for example, Matt. 16:16).

29. Seen me. Apparently Thomas had not accepted the invitation to touch the nailprints, and the scar left by the spear thrust (v. 27). But he demanded at least the evidence of his sight. He was unwilling to believe on the witness of others alone. Jesus rebuked his faithlessness and commended those who were willing to believe without the corroboration of their senses.

Blessed. Gr. *makariori* (see on Matt. 5:3).

30. Signs. [Epilogue to John's Gospel, John 20:30, 31; 21:24, 25.] Gr. *sēmeia* (see p. 208). The “many” in this verse may refer to those “signs” with which the reader was already familiar from other accounts of Christ's life already in circulation.

31. These are written. John here sums up the purpose of his writing and the plan in his selection of material. It was not his aim to give a full history or even a detailed biography of Jesus. He chose those “signs” that formed the underlying basis of his theme and purpose in writing.

Jesus is the Christ. Jesus was the name assumed by Christ in His humanity (see on Matt. 1:21). It was His personal name, the name by which He was known to His contemporaries. To many the name identified merely the carpenter's son. John's purpose was to show that the Jesus men knew was indeed the Messiah. On “Christ” meaning “Messiah” see on Matt. 1:1.

Son of God. See on Luke 1:35.

Life. Gr. *zōē* (see on chs. 1:4; 8:51; 10:10). See ch. 6:47; see on ch. 3:16.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–18DA 788–794
 2 DA 789; GC 423
 2–4AA 539
 3, 4 SL 53
 5–12DA 789
 13 DA 794; EW 187, 240, 244; GC 403; SR 371
 13–17DA 790
 15 ML 183
 16, 17 EW 187
 17 AH 544; 751, 835; WM 156
 17, 18 Ev 471; WM 146
 19 AA 26
 19–29DA 802–808
 20 DA 803; GC 423
 21, 22 6T 292
 22 COL 327; ML 37; TM 214
 22, 23 DA 805
 23 4T 17
 24 DA 806
 24–29EW 188
 25 1T 328; 2T 696; 4T 233
 25–29DA 807
 27–292T 104, 696
 28 DA 808; 6T 416
 29 1T 492; 4T 233
 31 DA 403; SC 50

CHAPTER 21

1 *Christ appearing again to his disciples was known of them by the great draught of fishes.*
 12 *He dineth with them: 15 earnestly commandeth Peter to feed his lambs and sheep: 18 foretellet him of his death: 22 rebuketh his curiosity touching John. 25 The conclusion.*

1. After these things. [*Appearance by the Lake of Galilee, John 21:1–23.*] That is, between the second appearance in the upper room (ch. 20:26–29) and the appearance on a mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16–20). This is evident from the fact that the incident is described as “the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples” (John 21:14). See Additional Note on Matt. 28.

Sea of Tiberias. See on ch. 6:1.

Shewed. Or, manifested.

2. Simon Peter. See on Mark 3:16.

Thomas. See on Mark 3:18.

Didymus. See on ch. 11:16.

Nathanael. See on Mark 3:18; John 1:45.

Cana in Galilee. See on ch. 2:1.

Sons of Zebedee. That is, James and John, thus designated only here in John (Matt. 4:21; Mark 10:35).

3. I go a fishing. Fishing had been Peter’s trade prior to becoming a disciple of Jesus (see Matt. 4:18–20). James and John had also been fishermen (Matt. 4:21). The purpose

of the suggestion was doubtless to replenish their meager funds. The disciples were not abandoning their higher calling. They had come to Galilee to meet their Master (see on Matt. 28:16; see DA 809, 810).

That night. Because of its clear waters, night was the suitable time for fishing on the lake (see on Luke 5:5).

Caught nothing. As on a previous occasion (see on Luke 5:5).

4. Was now come. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between this and the reading “was now coming,” suggesting, perhaps, that it was just beginning to be light.

Knew not. Perhaps their eyes were “holden” like those of the disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:16). Perhaps the light was as yet indistinct. Mary, also, had not recognized Jesus when He first appeared to her (John 20:14–16).

5. Children. In the gospel records Jesus addresses the disciples by this title only here. John uses the title in his epistle (1 John 2:13, 18). Moulton and Milligan suggest that here the title may be equivalent to “lads,” and cite a ballad in which the term is used of soldiers (*The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*). At any rate the form of address did not identify the speaker. The disciples doubtless took Him to be a stranger.

Meat. Gr. *prosphagion*, that which is eaten in addition to bread, such as flesh, fish, eggs, vegetables, etc. (cf. on ch. 6:9). Bread was the principal article of diet of the Jew. Here, where the question is put to fishermen, *prosphagion* refers most probably to fish. The form of the question in Greek shows that a negative answer is expected.

6. Right side. This was the side on which Jesus stood on the shore, and by asking them to cast the net on this side He designed to teach the lesson of faith and cooperation with divine power (see DA 811).

Multitude of fishes. This miracle would remind the disciples of the earlier miracle at which time they forsook all to follow the Master (see on Luke 5:11).

7. Whom Jesus loved. For this designation of John see on ch. 13:23. John was the first to recognize the Master as he was also the first to believe in the resurrection (ch. 20:8).

Simon Peter. Peter, impulsive, fervent, warmhearted, impetuous, and affectionate, responded in his characteristic fashion.

Fisher’s coat. Gr. *ependutēs*, “an outer garment.”

Naked. Gr. *gumnos*, which, though it may describe one completely unclothed, may also describe one whose outer garment only is removed, and so probably here. Doubtless, Peter desired to greet his Master respectfully clad.

Into the sea. The water was probably shallow enough for wading, for the record says nothing of his walking on the water.

8. Little ship. Gr. *ploiarion*, literally, “a little boat.” In v. 3 the word for “ship” is *ploion*. Some have concluded that because *ploiarion* is used in v. 8 the larger boat was abandoned because of the shallow water, and a smaller boat used to drag the net to land. However, it is possible that *ploion* and *ploiarion* are used synonymously as, apparently, in ch. 6:17, 19, 21, 22, 24. In that event only one boat was involved.

Two hundred cubits. About 100 yds.

9. Fire of coals. Compare ch. 18:18.

Fish. Gr. *opsarion* (see on ch. 6:9). Compare *prosphagion* (see on ch. 21:5). Jesus anticipated the weariness and hunger of the disappointed fishermen. The disciples did not inquire where the articles of food and the fire came from.

10. Bring of the fish. To supplement the supply being prepared on the coals.

11. Went up. Peter responded in his characteristic impulsiveness.

Hundred and fifty and three. The odd number indicates that the fish were actually counted. Some commentators have placed mystical and fanciful interpretations upon these numbers, such as that the “three” represents the Trinity. Such interpretations are not worthy of consideration.

12. Dine. Gr. *aristaō*, here, “to eat breakfast.”

Durst ask him. The disciples ate in silence, awed and reverent. Through their minds passed many thoughts that they dared not express.

13. Taketh bread. Jesus was the gracious host. There is slight textual evidence (cf. p. 146) for adding, “and having given thanks he gave to them.” But even without this textual support the prayer of thanksgiving may be presupposed.

14. Third time. John enumerates only the appearances to the disciples, not those to the women (Matt. 28:9; John 20:14–17). The appearances enumerated are: (1) to the disciples in the upper room on the evening of the resurrection day (John 20:19), (2) to the disciples a week later in the same upper room (John 20:26), (3) to the disciples by the Lake of Galilee. See Additional Note on Matt. 28.

15. Had dined. Or, “had finished breakfast” (see on v. 12).

Lovest. Gr. *agapaō*. In his reply to Jesus’ question Peter uses another word for “love,” namely *phileō*. These two words are at times distinguished, *agapaō* refers to a higher form of love, a love controlled by principle rather than emotion; *phileō*, to spontaneous, emotional love. For a discussion of the difference in meaning between these two words see on Matt. 5:43; John 11:3. There is a difference of opinion among scholars as to whether the two words are to be distinguished in meaning here or whether they are used synonymously as they are, for example, in John 14:23; cf. ch. 16:27.

In His first two questions Jesus used *agapaō*, and Peter replied with *phileō*. The third time Jesus used *phileo*, and Peter replied, as previously, with *phileō*. If the two words are to be distinguished, which intent cannot be determined with certainty, the following interpretation is possible: Jesus asked Peter twice whether he loved Him with the higher form of love (*agapaō*). Peter, however, admitted no more than common friendship, “Thou knowest that I love [*phileō*] thee.” The third time Jesus used the word Peter had twice employed and asked him whether he really loved Him as a friend (*phileō*), which the apostle had already twice admitted. Apparently to Peter there was an implied doubt in the third question. According to this interpretation, he was grieved, not because the same question had been put to him thrice, but because the third time Jesus changed His question and appeared to question the sincerity of Peter’s replies.

The three questions of Jesus possibly had reference to the three denials of Peter. Thrice the apostle had denied his Lord. He was given opportunity thrice to confess Him.

More than these. Gramatically, “these” could refer either to the other disciples or to the boat and fishing gear. However, since the latter have not been mentioned in the immediate context, it is preferable to consider the reference to be to the disciples.

Thou knowest. Peter’s reply is humble. All arrogant boasting is gone.

Feed my lambs. The lambs represented those new in the faith. Peter later compared the elders of the church to shepherds and those under their charge to a flock whom the elders were to feed (1 Peter 5:1–4). Ministers of God are shepherds serving under the leadership of the Chief Shepherd.

16. The second time. The question is repeated but without the addition of “more than these” (see v. 15). Peter’s love is directly challenged. Peter gives the same humble answer.

Feed. Gr. *poimainō*, “to shepherd,” which, of course, includes feeding. In v. 15 the word for “feed” is *boskō*, “to feed [as a herdsman].” The two words were used synonymously. Peter’s responsibility as a shepherd is further emphasized and perhaps enlarged. If the “lambs” were those new in the faith, “sheep” would refer to the flock generally. Despite his failure, Peter was not to be deprived of his call to be a “fisher” of men (Luke 5:10).

17. The third time. In His third question Jesus used a word for “love” different from that which He used in the first two. Whether a difference of meaning is intended is open to question. See on v. 15 for the significance of the question if the new word for “love” is to be distinguished from the preceding.

Grieved. See on v. 15 for a possible cause of grief. Peter knew he had given cause for others to doubt his love for his Master. The repeated questions brought his shameful denials vividly to mind, and like a barbed arrow must have cut his wounded heart.

Knowest all things. The third time Peter omitted the “yea,” or “yes” (see vs. 15, 16). He appealed to the all-seeing eye that read the innermost secrets of his life.

Feed my sheep. Jesus here repeats the charge (cf. vs. 15, 16). Peter had shown himself to be fully repentant. His heart was tender and full of love. He could now be entrusted with the flock.

18. Verily. See on Matt. 5:18; John 1:51.

Stretch forth thy hands. An obvious reference to crucifixion (see v. 19). According to tradition, which there seems to be little reason to doubt, Peter met death by crucifixion with his head down, on the plea that to be crucified like his Master was too great an honor for the one who had denied his Lord (see AA 537, 538).

19. Signifying. Compare ch. 12:33.

Glorify God. That is, by dying a martyr’s death, silently testifying to the power of Christianity. Compare 1 Peter 4:16.

Follow me. See a reflection of this charge in 1 Peter 2:21.

20. Turning about. This phrase and the word “following” suggest that Jesus had taken Peter apart from the others and had communicated with him privately concerning the nature of his death, perhaps as they were walking along the shore of the lake. John probably followed at some distance.

On his breast. See on ch. 13:23.

21. This man do. Peter had received a remarkable revelation regarding his own future and should have rested content with what the Lord had chosen to unveil to him. But the

apostle was curious as to what the future held in store for John. Jesus took the opportunity to impress upon Peter the important lesson of making first things first.

22. *If I will.* Christ's saying was a supposition. This is made clear in v. 23. Some misunderstood it and took it as a statement of fact. Jesus had simply said, in effect, "Suppose I should will that he tarry, that would not be a matter of concern to you, Peter." The reply came as a reproof to Peter. He was not to become too anxious about his fellow men. His matter of concern was to follow his Lord. This does not mean that we should not have a loving interest in a brother's welfare. But such solicitude must never take the place of keeping our eyes upon Jesus. Looking too intently upon our brother may lead us to fail where he fails.

23. *Should not die.* The brethren took as a statement of fact that which Jesus had set forth merely as a supposition (see on v. 22). They apparently believed the coming of Jesus to be very near (Acts 1:6, 7).

24. *The disciple.* See on ch. 20:30. The "disciple whom Jesus loved" (ch. 21:20) is identified as the writer of the Gospel (see p. 891). Verses 24, 25 are a fitting climax to the entire Gospel (see on ch. 20:30).

These things. Referring to the narrative of this chapter, and doubtless also to the entire Gospel.

We know. We are not informed to whom the "we" refers. Others, probably the elders at Ephesus (see p. 892), wished to affirm that what had been written was, in very fact, the truth. Spurious narratives, the work of unscrupulous authors, were afloat, and John was anxious that the true facts should be known.

25. *Many other things.* In this final verse John breaks forth in impassioned declaration concerning the many remarkable things his Master had said and done. He composed his Gospel with certain spiritual objectives in mind and related those events and recorded those sayings that would contribute to these objectives (see p. 892). The other gospel writers did likewise. Consequently many of Jesus' deeds and acts were left unrecorded.

Could not contain. The language here is hyperbolic, but effectively serves to emphasize the vastness of the words and works of Jesus. A similar hyperbole from about the period in which John wrote has come to us from Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai. He is reported to have said, "If the entire heaven were parchment and all the trees writing reeds, and the entire sea ink, that would not be sufficient to write down the wisdom I have learned from my teachers" (see Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, Vol. 2 p. 587). This Jewish figure has since been popularized in the gospel song "The Love of God," by F. M. Lehman. In writing of these concluding words of John, Calvin observes, "If the Evangelist, casting his eyes on the mightiness of the majesty of Christ, exclaims in astonishment, that even the whole world could not contain a full narrative of it, ought we to wonder?"

Amen. See on Matt. 5:18.

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⁶Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Jn 19:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.